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BEFORE LANGUAGE:
The Rage at the Mother

Claire Pajaczkowska BA (Hons)

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National Academic Awards in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the
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ABSTRACT

BEFORE LANGUAGE: THE RAGE AT THE MOTHER

Claire Pajaczkowska

The thesis argues that psychoanalysis is a necessary component of cultural analysis. It is argued that existing syntheses of psychoanalysis and political theories tend to limit the recognition of the relative autonomy of psychic reality by offering accounts of the social determination of subjectivity.

The contemporary reappropriation of psychoanalysis by feminist theorists has formulated new explanations of the social position of women as the 'second sex'. The challenge of feminism to traditional theories of culture and society includes questions of how sexual difference informs the transformation of thought into language, how language determines theory, and how theory conceptualises the difference between subjectivity and objectivity.

The contradictions within existing syntheses of structuralism, Marxism and feminism are described, and the differences between psychoanalysis and sociology are traced through the critical reception of Freud's Totem and Taboo by anthropologists. The validity of Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex is explored, and it is suggested that despite the limited acceptance by anthropologists, Totem and Taboo contains a valid theory of the relation of the subject to society. Freud's work is relocated within the paradigm of evolutionary biology to provide a materialist analysis of psychic structure that is not based on linguistics. A study of the origins of language reveals the complexity of the historical factors determining the co-evolution of representation, the maternal function, and the structuration of psychic reality.

New discoveries about the pre-Oedipal dyad that underlies the Oedipus complex have shown the effects of infantile dependence and maternal care on adult subjectivity, and it is argued that factors such as the unconscious fear of dependency and of women are of particular significance for feminist thought.

It is argued that the theory of pre-Oedipal and pre-linguistic subjectivity can make intelligible aspects of ideologies of racism and sexism that are not fully explained by sociological or political theory. The mechanism of projection or projective identification, it is argued, provides a specifically psychoanalytic contribution to existing theories of culture.

BEFORE LANGUAGE:
The Rage at the Mother

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Introduction

The past twenty years have witnessed an increase in the recognition of the importance of the politics of representation as a determining feature of the social position of women. This thesis is a contribution to the debate on the place of sexual difference in the politics of representation. The idea that systems of representation and misrepresentation, recognition and misrecognition, can have a determining effect on people's lives is not a new one; indeed it is the basis of the Marxist theory of ideology. However, the recognition that these systems of representation do not derive so much from social reality as from psychic reality is a recent development in political theory, a development that is crucial for feminism.

The range of political practices that can be taken to constitute the oppression of women includes their economic exploitation in the workplace :

- as a predominantly reserve army of wage labourers;
- as part-time workers with little job security and little institutional support, such as childcare facilities;
- as unpaid domestic workers in the home, with almost no social recognition of the work of childrearing;
- as absent from the majority of the decision-making processes forming the laws to which they are subject;
- as actively excluded from positions of cultural, religious or artistic authority;
- as victims of, witnesses of, and, probably most damaging of all, perpetrators of the immense cruelty towards women

that is a standard feature of all human societies.

Some of these forms of oppression are common to other social groups, the working class, ethnic and immigrant populations in colonialist communities, children - whose needs are systematically misrepresented - and the physically disabled, whose disabilities are consistently misrepresented. Therefore many of the practical attempts at changing these structures of exploitation and oppression are made in collaboration with these other groups.

Much of feminist theory is the search to understand the failure of practical attempts at ameliorating intolerable working or living conditions. In a sense, we need to think only when things go wrong. Theory may be of direct use, for example to guide specific practical projects; or theory can be of less immediate practical use, to produce new questions for guiding thinking about practice. This thesis is concerned with the second type of usage of theory, that is, with producing new ways of thinking about old and familiar problems.

The basic question of the thesis is really "Why is it so difficult to think about women?"; to think rationally, realistically and helpfully about women, their place in society and their representation. Thinking about women, the social position of women, and the representation of the difference between men and women, without repeating stereotypes, is extremely difficult. Not only can this be deduced from experience, as it is just as difficult for women as for men; but this can also be deduced from the

great number of explanations of social exploitation, poverty, inequality, misrepresentation and so on, which manage to formulate systematic and logical theories only by either completely avoiding all reference to the question of sexual difference, or by lapsing into irrationality and fixed stereotypes when women are discussed.

One of the places from which to start to answer the question, of why it is so difficult to think about women in a realistic and helpful way, is by comparing the different representations of women that exist in the various explanations of women's social position.

One can start by comparing the type of difference that differentiates women from men, with other types of differences, such as those which differentiate between men, between individual men and groups of men, between communities, between nations, and especially 'races', between adult and child, between culture and nature, between human and inhuman. And (although these comparisons alone would be enough to fill the feminist research agenda for several generations), one can also speculate as to whether the human capacity for making such differences, for thinking in categories, is itself informed by the reality of sexual difference.

When I began reading about, and thinking about, the irrationality governing the social position, and the misrepresentation of women, most explanations emphasised the power of social institutions such as the economy, the workplace, the state and the family in determining women's

experience of themselves. The meaning of women's lives was explained, almost entirely, as being derived from factors external to themselves and their identity as women. The category 'women' was often conceptualised as a category produced by the conjunction of a number of political and historical structures, with no intrinsic meaning in itself.

Therefore, I began this research assuming that the work of the thesis would be to describe the effect of social structures, and especially symbolic structures, on the psyche. I started from a perspective of social determinism, comprising both culturalist and structuralist theories and concepts, assuming that subjective experience is largely determined by economic, historical and social forces. Most feminist research seemed to indicate that gender identity, like class identity, and, later, cultural and ethnic identity, was a specific construct of social, symbolic and historical forces. And feminists also claimed that gender identity could be transformed through political or ideological restructuring of institutions.

Therefore this thesis was, initially, to have explored the social metaphors of sexual difference and to demonstrate how these create, construct or determine the subjective experience of sexual difference. I was hoping that the linguistic analysis of metaphor might throw some light on the symbolic divisions of 'masculine' and 'feminine' in our society. It seemed clear that sexual difference was used, for the purposes of social classification, in a metaphoric way.

Linguistics, it seemed, would help to produce a more precise description of sexual difference as a social metaphor. The structuralist and culturalist theories, developed in anthropology, literary theory, film theory and cultural studies, have found ways of uniting the social determinism of socialist politics and Marxist analysis, with the symbolic determinism of textual analysis and semiotics, and a psychoanalytic account of subjectivity.

A variety of different syntheses, contradictory to a greater or lesser degree, co-exist in the many forms of structuralism to be found within social and cultural analysis. Those that start from a theoretical and political basis in Marxism emphasise the primacy of class contradiction and economic determinism. From the perspective of Marxist-feminist theory, the family is described as a social structure belonging to the political superstructure, exercising its power through "familial ideology", although sometimes intervening directly in the economic mode of production. Marxist-feminist theory of the family acknowledges that the family as reproductive unit pre-dates capitalism but emphasises that that since the growth of capitalism the biologically reproductive unit has become secondary to the socially reproductive unit. Within this genre of theory there exists a long-standing controversy over the primacy of the forces of 'production' and 'reproduction', and over the articulation of the history of 'patriarchal' social relations and 'class contradiction'. As a theoretical controversy it raises

questions of the structural status of gender, such as whether sexual difference is to be conceptualised as an effect of social institutions and practices, or whether sexual difference has a structuring function.

As a political controversy, it impinges on questions about how to prioritise specific struggles or campaigns on the political agenda. Questions about how women should organise, in relation to political parties and government, institutions and organisations at work, and structures in the private sphere, at home and in personal relationships, are also raised through the debate on the relative determination of the processes of production and reproduction. Most of the texts from the first wave of post-war feminism centred on the articulation of women's history and the history of class society, either in a diachronic or a synchronic form (Rowbotham 1972 and Mitchell 1972).

For classical Marxists the suggestion that sexual difference might have an autonomous structuring function in society, that was quite separate from the contradictions of capital and class, was equated with "bourgeois feminism" and consequently attacked. Radical feminism, which suggests that sexual contradiction has a more basic and fundamental structuring function than class, or economic structures, was subject to a number of contradictory representations. It was seen as both 'middle class' and 'extremist', both naive and calculating (opportunistic), the ideology of the reactionary 'housewife' and the

ideology of the 'career' woman. The theoretical critiques of ideologies of the "eternal" human nature had been originally advanced in order to challenge the preconceptions of a dominant middle class, whose values were assumed to be universal values, whose standards were absolute. Applied to ideologies of gender, the critique of the "eternal feminine", or essential differences, was aimed at challenging the institutionalised sexism based on preconceptions of masculine values, and replacing this with a more flexible or open system of negotiating male and female collaboration. In this respect the critique of essentialism seemed a positive and progressive step towards a materialist and feminist theory and a genuinely radical practice.

However, the theoretical critique of essentialism in relation to gender, seemed to have become repetitive, fixed, unquestioning, as the term was used without explanation as an automatically negative judgement. It often seemed to have passed from an active, dialectical process into the fixed rigidity of dogma. The artificial fixity of this negative critique of gender essentialism, which sometimes took on the form of a kind of law of feminist and Marxist theory, produced opposition in the form of forces of reaction. Reactionary ideologies of mysticism and idealisation equated science with masculine delusion and patriarchal oppression, and reacted with ideologies of anti-intellectualism. Nevertheless, it seems that feminism now urgently needs to reconsider the theories

of the interaction of bodily, mental and socio-symbolic structures and to address the questions which have been rejected as "essentialist". The extraordinary emphasis placed on the role of social structure in determining subjectivity, integral to the sociological basis of most cultural and anthropological analysis, seems to be operating as a form of denial. What is being denied?

The first chapter, which comprises a series of inquiries into the method of feminist research, argues that a psychoanalytic method is an indispensable part of what is loosely termed a "science of sexual difference". In these inquiries attention is drawn to the forms of knowledge produced by the component discourses of this interdisciplinary science. Debates from the philosophy of science indicate that, however it is defined, and however its method adjudicated, science necessarily has an object which it sets out to describe in as realistic a way as possible. The history and philosophy of science provides many ways of conceptualising the scientific method of description, of defining an object of knowledge, and of deciding the meaning of realism. I made much use of these philosophies in setting out to use the concept of science to describe the theoretical work of the thesis as a contribution to a science of sexual difference. A substantial body of thought had popularised anti-scientism as a politically radical practice. Many Marxists and feminists, seeking initially to demystify the concept of scientific thought through analysing the social and

historical influences on concepts from the natural sciences, developed a critique of the concept of science itself. It was being claimed that science should primarily be understood as a discursive practice, as one discourse amongst many with no greater claims to truth than any other discourse. As part of a broader cultural movement away from realism and toward subjectivism this critique of false objectivity was an integral part of feminist cultural theory. At the outset the ideas of "discursive relativity" seemed useful and attractive, they appeared to offer a genuinely democratic account of knowledge and reality. The critique of science as a fictitious "master narrative", as suggested by post-structuralism, was a logical extension of Foucault's redefinition of science as sociology of knowledge, or discourse. The idea of science as a search for truth was replaced by the idea of science as discourse.

I found the more useful explorations of science as discourse to be those that attempt to reveal the implicit subjectivities of particular sciences, showing the tension of subject-to-object relations, without necessarily thereby dissolving the concept of the object into the subjective practice. The work of Kristeva on linguistic science, the work of Devereux on psychology, of Jacob on biological science, all served as examples of this process. Each sought to strengthen the meaning of science as realism, or truth, by including within this the truth of a systematic understanding of subjectivity.

It seemed that sexual difference was a central part

of this subjective access to truth, or objective reality, and that the relation between sexual difference and truth could be explored further.

This formulation, which emerged towards the end of chapter 1, sounded very similar to some Lacanian tenets. It seemed to be a psychoanalytic formulation, or definition, of the question of feminism's relation to science and truth.

There are several existing theoretical paradigms for articulating the discourses of Marxism, feminism, structuralism and psychoanalysis. The work of Julia Kristeva, Juliet Mitchell, Luce Irigaray, Laura Mulvey, Stephen Heath and contributors to debates in journals such as New Left Review, Screen, m/f, Feminist Review, has provided a rich and compelling problematic for formulating the problems of identification, subjectivity, and sexuality in relation to language and social structure. I found this work inspiring, and particularly admired the breadth of scope and application of the theoretical work. The concept of theoretical practice was being used in a number of ways, giving it a meaning which expanded Althusser's restricted definition. The interdisciplinary theory of the politics of representation was being developed across a broad range of cultural practices. Theory, history, textual analysis, representational practice and political practice were interconnected in the structuralist paradigm. Using Althusser's reformulation of the role of cultural reproduction, and the part played by ideology in that

reproduction, the structural paradigm drew parallels between Levi-Strauss' study of myth and Lacan's formulations on the unconscious.

As well as admiring the breadth of scope of this paradigm, it was the apparent unity of theory that drew me. It was only when gradually confronted with the contradictions of this paradigm that I began to realise that the apparently systematic, orderly and cogent formulations it produced were internally contradictory.

Firstly, there was the problem of how to resolve Levi-Strauss' structuralist premise of the primacy of exchange relations with the Marxist theory that production determines exchange relations. Many critics had speculated over whether structuralism was to be understood as a revolutionary departure from the positivist sociological tradition, or whether its foregrounding of symbolic structure was a typically idealist doctrine characteristic of the ideology of late capitalism. Some seemed to leave the contradiction unresolved, others to substitute for Marxism a less determinist form of socialist thought, "libertarianism" or "socialist humanism" for example. It was important to conserve the Marxist view of the power of economic structure to mould social and cultural institutions, to maintain Marxist versions of materialism. But it was equally important to give full recognition to the discoveries made by women's political experience, about the centrality of the politics of representation and the fact that very often "consciousness" (as Marx termed it)

does determine "life". Especially if "consciousness" is understood as "including" the unconscious, as it was later defined. Althusser had certainly taken on the Lacanian deconstruction of "consciousness", and had used this to formulate some very demanding questions. Defining ideology as an omni-historical reality, he nevertheless sought the "history of ideology". Locating psychic processes and unconscious systems of representation as the centre of the "decentred subject" of ideology, he implied that psychic structure is the material basis of ideology.

The Althusserian theory is both rigorous and exact but my personal doubts about the validity of the paradigm became the real starting point of the thesis. The structuralist paradigm leaves no space for ambiguity, or doubt, and yet these seemed most real to me. My intuitive understanding contradicted what I "knew" to be the case through education and theory. It was necessary to find, or begin to build, a non-idealist, non-mystical, materialist account of feminine intuition. The structuralist paradigm did not recognise feelings or emotions as facts, only as effects. Without recreating an ideology of romantic subjectivism, it is important that the part played by emotional reality should be fully recognised in feminist theory. What is the influence of affective states such as pleasure or pain, certainty and doubt, safety and fear on the process of thinking, and on the representation of thinking in the system of theory and science? Is there a science of emotions, where feelings might be recognised as

facts? How can subjective states of emotions be used in ascertaining the nature of objective reality? How can emotional facts be compared with or articulated with tangible facts such as historical, written, documents, or measurable facts such as numbers, statistics, dates, economic or social quantifiable data?

Traditionally, the concept of fact has excluded all reference to subjectivity, so that the concept of an emotional fact is not easy to accept. Descriptions of emotional facts have traditionally been the realm of religion, theology, poetry or art, and especially music. Also women have traditionally been represented as 'more emotional' than men, often in such a way as to imply this is an impediment to rational knowledge or true perception.

More recently, psychologies have sought to describe emotional facts in a more systematic and scientific way. Psychoanalytic theory in particular suggested that subjective perception, based on emotional experience, is the only basis for arriving at objective knowledge or truth. This paradoxical, scientifically revolutionary fact, which is the basis of the practice of psychoanalytic therapy, seemed to parallel the concept of feminine intuition, giving a scientific description of a systematically undervalued female experience. It was, in the Gramscian terms, a transformation of 'commonsense' into 'good sense'.

If this was true of therapeutic practice, how could psychoanalysis be used to study culture? Can

psychoanalysis be used to study culture? Having "already" discovered psychoanalysis in the form of structuralist theory, the answer to the question seemed self-evident. Yes, psychoanalysis is used to study culture if it is used as an adjunct of linguistics and historical materialism to provide an account of the socialisation of the subject through language and the symbolic. Otherwise psychoanalytic interpretations of culture were criticised as 'reductive', 'essentialist', 'ahistorical', 'individualist'. Althusser had chosen neo-Freudian theory because it remained true to Freud's description of intrapsychic conflict. Lacan redefined intrapsychic conflict as that of a subject decentred in language. Both of these were judged in positive terms in opposition to "ego-psychology" of orthodox and especially medically-based psychoanalysis. Through Lacan, psychoanalysis was seen as compatible with historical materialism and revolutionary Marxism. Within a slightly different paradigm, Kristeva, Mitchell, Mulvey and Heath used the Freudian and Lacanian theories because of their central concern with the structuring function of sexual difference. The alliance of psychoanalysis to revolutionary communism was modulated in the direction of a, no less formidable, demand for the "overthrow of patriarchy".

Lacanian theory, as will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3 and 4, accords overriding significance to the topographic aspect of Freudian metapsychology. Freud's method was based on a metapsychology comprising three

theoretical axes, an economic description of mental energy or drives, a dynamic description of intrapsychic conflict, and a topographical description of the mind as a spatial "map". The basic metapsychology in 1900-1918 included a schematic topographical description of the different types of functioning in the nervous system governing consciousness, these were the "systems Cs, Pcs, and Ucs", (Conscious, Preconscious and Unconscious). Each system used a different method of conducting and discharging nervous energy and the unconscious system was divided from the others by an impermeable "barrier" of censorship. Later, in 1923, Freud developed a second topography which described the operations of the mind in terms of the "agencies" of id, ego and superego. Both topographies are currently used simultaneously, and Lacan employs Freudian terminology as well as his own topography of the "Symbolic", "Imaginary", and "Real". But whereas Freudian theory places great importance on the instinctual and conflictual aspects of the mind, such as constitute the central material of affective life, Lacanian theory accords more significance to the topographic aspect.

Lacanian theory is not, substantially, a theory of affectivity, nor of libidinal or instinctual activity. The body is discussed only insofar as its anatomical structure is reproduced as representation in mental structure. The Freudian id, so directly connected to bodily experience, is for Lacan transcribed into a "discourse of the Other", a

discursive rather than bodily reality. This shift of emphasis is what permitted Althusser's appropriation of psychoanalysis as an adjunct to historical materialism. This movement away from bodily and affective states to discursive phenomena is what made Lacanian theory more compatible with feminist theory within the structuralist and Marxist paradigm. The value of this formulation can be judged by its widespread usage and the wealth of debate and controversy it generated; the past fifteen years have shown a rapid growth of Lacanian-based study in academic disciplines.

What makes Lacanian theory compatible with the structuralist paradigm is that it thereby becomes the foundation of subjectivity. Lacan's usage of Saussurean semiology is derived from the intermediaries of Jakobson and Levi-Strauss, and whilst Jakobson's concerns are mainly with phonology and poetics as linguistic structures, Levi-Strauss and Saussure are unambiguously Durkheimian in their concept of language as a social law. But whereas Lacan uses Levi-Strauss, the latter is unequivocal in his rejection of a psychoanalytic explanation of social structure; the description of totemism he gives is a purely structural one which he conceives of as quite autonomous:

As affectivity is the most obscure side of man there has been the constant temptation to resort to it, forgetting that what is refractory to explanation is ipso facto unsuitable for use in explanation. We know virtually nothing of anxiety itself, and it is for biologists of the future to show us some order in this phenomenon. (1)

Here the rejection of the psychological reality of social structure is evident, as for Levi-Strauss' structural

anthropology the psyche is quite simply an 'internal' correlate of an external social reality, even psychological explanation is erased since 'biology' is identified as the future source of information on anxiety.

The second and third chapters of the thesis explore in greater detail, and in depth, the history of this misunderstanding between anthropology and psychoanalysis.

But before describing the anthropological critique of psychoanalysis, the socialist critique should be spelled out. Althusser's acceptance of the Lacanian doctrine should not be held as indicative of a more general acceptance, by socialism, of psychoanalysis itself. Apart from the work of a few socialist psychoanalysts, and the work of the Frankfurt School in pre-war Germany and in the United States, socialism and psychoanalysis have mostly been understood as mutually exclusive.

The socialist critique of psychoanalysis is as varied as its range of critics, but it is possible to generalise across the range of critiques and find points which are common to all. Marxist theory usually criticises and rejects psychoanalytic theory on three counts: as being 'individualistic', as being 'essentialist', and as 'ahistorical'. What validity is there in these criticisms?

The critique of psychoanalysis as 'individualistic' is one which socialists share with anthropologists and social scientists, who are apprehensive that it attempts to explain social events and social structures in terms of individual needs. But it is based on a misapprehension, as the concept of the individual is not a psychoanalytic

concept. Whether human beings are understood according to the first Freudian topography, as constituted by a dynamic interaction between the mental and physical systems of the unconscious, preconscious and conscious, or whether conceived according to the second topography as comprising the conflicts between ego, superego and id, the human being is defined as a divided subject. The idea of the completely unified self as in-dividual is understood as one of the ego's defences against the more difficult knowledge of one's more conflicting motives and impulses.

The relation between 'internal' psychic processes and 'external' social entails a complex interaction of identificatory mechanisms such as projection and introjection. The boundaries of the 'self' are often defined in relation to the body's physical edges, the skin, the sensory organs, etc., but may be based on an imaginary version of the physical boundaries. The bodily metaphors for the subject are ubiquitous in gesture, thought, art and language, and pre-Oedipal experience of the body is predominant in such metaphors. Oral metaphors include such terms as "thirst" for knowledge, "biting" wit or satire, "hunger" for knowledge, "devouring" information, a "half-baked" idea and "half-digested" knowledge; and in the arts the evaluation of introjected imagery is defined in terms of "taste". These metaphors are all those of oral introjection, one aspect of the mechanism of identification which is constitutive of the subject. The other aspect of identification is projection which is often used defensively for the protection of the 'self' from criticism

and self-dislike. The metaphors associated with projection are almost all to do with expulsion, rejection, denial and with anal excretion. The connection between the psychological process of identification and the organic processes of incorporation and excretion is not only metaphoric. K. Abraham has noted:

The first vital relation of the infant to external objects consists in sucking up into its mouth a substance that is suitable for it and accessible to it. In its embryonic life, the first organ that is formed in connection with the earliest simple process of cell division is the so-called 'blastophore', an organ which is permanently retained ... For a time, in embryo, there exists an open connection between the intestinal canal (rectum) and the caudal part of the neural canal (canalis neurentericus). The path along which stimuli may be transmitted from the intestinal canal to the nervous system might thus be said to be marked out organically. (2)

The imaginary body which is to be found in metaphors of behaviour, language and all symbolic processes differs from the real, organic body in that the former is a pre-Oedipal body the experience of which is retained in unconscious memory, whilst the latter is simply an organic entity. Of course the two continue to interact and affect one another, as Freud and Fliess discovered when analysing hysterical symptoms. But whereas Freud and psychoanalysts have described the imaginary body as one determinant of the ego's mechanism of identification ("the ego is first of all a body ego": Freud), and as a vestigial infantile experience, the sociological theories try to conceptualise the imaginary body as a product of social structure. For example, Mary Douglas and Edmund Leach have each proposed that the subjective experience of the boundaries that serve

to differentiate 'internal' and 'external' space derives from symbolic systems that exist to demarcate social space. Symbolic systems, they argue, have their own level of determinacy, so that the body is only socially significant insofar as it is the bearer of representations of the social space.

Of course the body is not the only component of the subject understood in psychoanalytic terms, since the division of the subject propels the human being into symbol formation and eventually into culture. The socialist critique of psychoanalysis as a study of the individual, or of intrapsychic processes only, is often complemented by the structuralist concept of the subject, as developed by Foucault, Derrida, Barthes and Lacan. However it seems increasingly true that this concept of the 'divided subject' or 'decentred subject' is a Freudian concept that has simply been emptied of its specific content, the Oedipus complex and infantile sexuality, and has been redeployed as a concept of a psychic structure containing only social representations. The dialectic between social determinants is complicated, and when describing the Oedipus complex for example it is impossible to determine whether it exists in order for society and culture to be possible, or whether the latter exists in order to contain it. But there has been a tradition of undue emphasis on the determining aspects of symbolic and social structures which has obscured the reality of psychic process. It is thus not only incorrect but also hypocritical to use knowledge of social systems to obscure psychic reality and

then criticise psychoanalysis for being about the "obscure side of man". The Freudian metapsychology is used to describe the processes in individuals, and the unconscious was always defined as a 'collective' unconscious by Freud.

If the individual is understood as one aspect of the subject, as a particular representation of the self, or ego, it becomes possible to define the dialectic between psyche and social structure. The ego is made up of conscious and unconscious representations of the body, real and imaginary bodies, and includes identifications with other subjects and other parts of subjects. The ego also comprises adaptations to reality and the demands of the superego. But it is a central condition of the subject that it is interconnected, through the necessary, involuntary and partly unconscious process of identification, with others. It is not only the superego or the symbolic that connects subject and society but the ego itself. Identity, or the idea of an individual, is a product of a more active process of identification, which is common to subjects, groups, institutions, and which forms the basis of social structure.

When psychoanalysis is criticised as a doctrine of idealism, this is usually from the basis of the traditional philosophical distinction between idealism and materialism. Many Marxists think that psychoanalysis suggests that ideas have an existence that is independent of material reality. From the perspective of historical or dialectical materialism, psychological theories seem to explain 'consciousness' or mental processes within terms of a

conceptual framework which takes little account of material reality.

The concept of essentialism is also derived from the philosophical distinction between 'essence' and 'appearance', and the dualism which defines these categories as opposites. From the perspective of dialectical materialism, essentialism is defined as follows:

Essence is a sum total of all latent ties, relations and internal laws determining the main features and trends in development of a material system. Appearances are individual phenomena, properties or processes expressing outward aspects of reality, a form of manifestation and revelation of some essence ... Essentialists ascribe an ideal, divine origin to the essence of things and contend that it is primary in relation to material things.
(3)

Essence, as an embodiment of 'internal laws', is comparable to the concept of structure in structuralist theory, and a fully materialist analysis must define 'system' in relation to 'structure', or 'appearance' in relation to 'essence' through empirical and theoretical forms of knowledge. Essentialists are unable to account for the history of the structure or 'internal laws' except through an idealist account, such as a religious or mystical 'divine origin', and so are unable to define the interaction of 'essence' and 'material system'.

As the term 'essentialism' has acquired a critical value as an unquestionable negative judgement, its meaning has altered. Connotations of 'essence' in the sense of a concentrated distillation, a physical substance such as a liquid, or an intense smell, have been added to the

original philosophical meaning. Thus the critique of undialectical thinking has become confused with the cerebral separation from the baser sensorial register of touch, taste and smell.

Ironically, the contemporary socialist feminisms that have formulated the most forceful critique of classical psychoanalysis as "essentialist" or idealist, have often opted for a Lacanian version of psychoanalysis. The latter, they suggest, places less emphasis on the significance of the 'drives', instincts and the biological basis of mental activity, and is thus more compatible with existing theories of gender identity within the social sciences. However it seems more likely that the Lacanian version is the more idealist, and essentialist. Lacan, working with a Levi-Straussian concept of the symbolic, sees the unconscious as a predominantly signifying structure, and sees language as the basic material of the psyche. As I argue in greater depth in the second chapter of the thesis, Levi-Strauss combines this symbolic determinism with a form of physiological reductionism, since he locates the structure of signifying systems within the neuro-anatomy of the brain, in an entirely metaphoric way. Neuronic 'firing' is seen as analogous to phonemic difference and the creation of meaning in language. Although social structure is derived from an innate capacity for humans to recognise the "exigency of the rule as rule"; the laws of social structure, linguistic structure and anatomical structure are defined as analogous. Unsurprisingly, this idealism is based on an

idealisation of masculinity; the Levi-Straussian theory of kinship defines the rules of alliance as the exchange of women, Lacanian theory defines language as phallogentric. Why should this be the case? Is there a sexual logic underlying the formulation of abstract categories such as those of 'materiality' and 'idealism'? For the Lacanian Marxists and feminists the structuralist theory is directly compatible with their preconceived notion of materialism. Removing the 'essentialist' references to the body, in the economic framework of the Freudian metapsychology's theory of the instincts and drives, the science of linguistics is called upon to fill the gap, and so produce a 'unified' materialism of psyche in society. This theory presents an apparent orderliness but many contradictory formulations, such as are to be found in Mitchell's Psychoanalysis and Feminism (1974) for example, which are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Psychoanalysis, I contend, contains an entirely materialist theory of mind, and although it shares many of its objects with theories of language, culture, history and religion, it is not inextricably linked with these or dependent on them for its materialism. Although it defines mental structures as autonomous areas of human activity, without reducing mind to any of its physiological, anatomical or genetic components, psychoanalysis is ultimately a 'biology' of the mind. How is biology to be conceptualised other than as a physiological, anatomical or genetic analysis of living matter? In what way could psychoanalysis be said to include a "biological

materialism"? Ernst Mayr has defined biological theory as comprising different types of analytic method:

The word biology suggests a uniform and unified science. Yet recent developments have made it increasingly clear that biology is a most complex area - indeed that the word biology is a label for two largely separate fields that greatly differ in method and basic concepts. These are 'functional' and 'evolutionary' biology. The functional biologist is vitally concerned with the operation and interaction of structural elements, from molecules up to organs and whole individuals. Functional biologists deal with proximate causes and ask 'how' questions The chief technique of the functional biologist is the experiment, and his approach is essentially the same as that of the physicist and the chemist. Indeed by isolating the studied phenomenon sufficiently from the complexities of the organism he may achieve the ideal of a purely physical or chemical experiment. In spite of certain limitations of this method one must agree with the functional biologist that such a simplified approach is an absolute necessity for achieving his particular objectives. The spectacular success of biochemical and biophysical research justifies this direct though distinctly simplistic approach. The evolutionary biologist differs in his method and in the problems in which he is interested. His basic question is 'Why?', 'How come?'. Every organism, whether an individual or a species, is the product of a long history, a history that dates back more than two thousand million years. There are no 'absolute phenomena' in biology. Everything is time bound and space bound, the animal or plant or micro-organism he is working with is but a link in the evolutionary chain of changing forms, none of which has any permanent validity. (4).

Mayr describes the functional biology as a teleology, it deals with 'proximate causes'; and evolutionary biology as a teleonomy dealing with 'ultimate causes'. So if we accept Mayr's judgement on the state of biological theory it is possible to conceive of psychoanalysis as a part of the evolutionary approach to understanding the species in terms of its history. Without reducing psychic reality to the functional biologist's concepts of physiology, anatomy, or the neuro-chemical processes of the organism, it is

reasonable to define Freudian psychoanalysis as a materialist theory.

Of course, Freud did start from the perspective of functional biology, and had been very much influenced, through Brucke, by the work of Helmholtz who could be described as a functional materialist. Freud's early work such as the Project for a Scientific Psychology (1895) was partly an attempt to relate psychological processes of memory, perception, recognition and representation, directly to the neurological systems of the brain and central nervous system. Later Freud's search for 'proximate causes' in psychic processes was supplemented, and then supplanted, by his inquiries into the longer term history of human culture, and psychoanalysis was firmly located within evolutionary science. Indeed the most recently discovered of the metapsychological papers, rediscovered in 1987, is an account of the phylogenetic method in psychoanalysis. The theory of psychic development was based on a version of the so-called biogenetic law, accounting for the way in which the anatomical development of the foetus in the womb is correlated to the development of the libidinal stages in childhood and to psychic development in maturity. The biogenetic law, discussed more fully in chapter four, is a theory of recapitulation, which seeks to relate the morphology and psychology of existing forms to the pattern of evolution of their predecessors. The form of recapitulation of ancestral forms that is specific to humans, and some other primates, is that of paedomorphosis,

the retention of "juvenile, even larval, characteristics in adult life" (Medawar, 1985).

Although frequently dismissed as a vestigial remain of an unfortunately nineteenth century "flavour" (Mitchell, 1974), Freud's version of the biogenetic law is a vital part of the general metapsychology. More recently, Sulloway's study in the history of science Freud, Biologist of the Mind (1980), demonstrated the centrality of this evolutionary perspective in the metapsychology and indeed throughout Freud's work. Many contemporary psychoanalysts have continued this line of inquiry. In the 1940s Susan Isaacs and Paula Heimann showed that the concept of the drive (the psychic representation of instinct) can be readily linked to hormonal processes, and can be traced through biochemical changes. The effect of hormones becomes central in defining the effects of unconscious phantasy and infantile drives on the process of adult maturation. Hormones have the function of regulating the onset and the termination of processes of physical growth, they are also central in effecting sexual behaviour. The relation between the genetic influence on growth and the psychological processes is impossible to determine in any exact, functional, way. But it is clear that human diphasic sexuality, with two periods of growth, in infancy and following physical maturity, is an evolutionary development produced by paedomorphosis. Medawar and Medawar (1985) state: "The genetic system of a species is the whole of that which provides for the transmission of genetic information from one generation to the next. A

most important element is the mating system." (p.116). There is no doubt that the Freudian view of the human 'mating system' as governed by the Oedipus complex is fully compatible with this theory and that it serves to amplify and illustrate how such transmission is reproduced. The human evolutionary development of extended dependence, prematurity at birth and diphasic sexual growth, produced by the 'paedomorphic' form of recapitulationism, is governed by the hormones.

The relative rates of development of the several parts of the body ... are not invariant. One of the most interesting, and from an evolutionary point of view one of the most important, departs from a set tempo and order of differentiation in that whereby organisms become sexually mature at a relatively juvenile stage, what is in effect an adult therefore retains juvenile, even larval, characteristics in adult life (5).

The interaction of genetic, instinctual and psychological factors in producing the human capacity for symbol formation and language is more fully discussed in chapter four on the origins of language and the origins of writing. Whatever the impact of the evolution of language, speech and symbolic behaviour on the human organism, there is no doubt that an accurate conceptualisation of the human psyche cannot describe it in a disembodied form. The materialism of mind is as necessary as the materialist description of society and of language.

So, Freudian psychoanalysis, far from being an idealist or essentialist doctrine, is a strongly materialist theory. The problem this now raises for defining the interaction of psychic reality social structure and history, is that of three conflicting

materialisms. The Durkheimian basis of sociology issues from a social or symbolic materialism, the Marxist basis of historical materialism bases itself, ultimately, in an economics, whilst psychoanalysis even as a theory of meaning, is ultimately based within a "biology of the mind". This conflict of explanatory methods has been discussed by Timpanaro in On Materialism (1975), who examines the discrepancies between the differing definitions of materialism and argues against recent Marxist structuralisms. Timpanaro stresses biological materialism as a necessary component of Marxist materialism, to ground class struggle in its appropriate temporal axis:

A phenomenon like capitalism arose on the socio-economic level; it belongs to that form of historicity with an accelerated rhythm which is characteristic of human history alone and which is related to the new mode of transmitting experiences through learning and not only through biological heredity. (6)

Nevertheless Timpanaro's "route" to biology is through the bodily needs such as nutrition, illness, death, which he considers to be insufficiently accounted for by historical materialism. There is no discussion of the extent to which gender and sexuality are part of the problematic. We have seen that within a Marxist model of base and superstructure the institutions of family, culture, the question of gender identity, sexual difference and the role of infancy are all considered to be superstructural forms. The Oedipus complex, and many aspects of the psyche itself, could be classified, in this

model, as ideological forms.

In contradistinction to this the psychoanalytic model attributes to the Oedipus complex, infancy, and sexual difference, a fundamental and powerful determinacy. These are seen as the contradictions underlying many historical events, the basis of religion, culture and even the basis of reality itself.

Many freudo-marxisms have sought to synthesise these two materialisms, although each is practically compendious; these syntheses have rarely proved satisfactory to either socialists or psychoanalysts. In using both theories we have two bases, each offering a description of the same object or, to use a spatial metaphor, each occupying the 'space' of the other; and yet neither theory can be reduced to the other's conceptual system or translated into the terms of the other's concepts. If the base-superstructure metaphor is a spatial one, what if we considered, as does Timpanaro, the spheres of 'production' and 'reproduction' as time-bound processes, what are the temporal axes of the Oedipal complex and of class contradiction?

The claim that psychoanalytic explanation of cultural forms is 'ahistorical' is part of the critique of the former as an essentialist or idealist doctrine. We have seen that Freud's biological materialism is an evolutionary paradigm which contains an implicit view of historical processes. These processes, however, do not correlate with the description of history offered by historical materialism. Although the economic mode of production, social superstructure and ideologies of the epochs of Greek

slave society, feudal Britain and late capitalist USA do not resemble one another, similar Oedipal structures are evident in narratives from each of these cultures. Thus Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, many of the Greek myths, Shakespeare's Hamlet and many of his tragedies, and innumerable contemporary narratives found in Hollywood cinema, all describe Oedipal tragedies or fantasies of a life or death struggle between son and father, protagonist and the law. The forms of Greek tragic theatre are specific to the culture of classical antiquity, the forms and language of Shakespearian drama are also specific to the class structure of seventeenth century Britain, just as the forms of popular cinema are specific to an industrial capitalist economy. But the content of the Oedipal struggle does not change its basic form when other aspects of society change following a transformation of the mode of production. The forms in which the Oedipus complex may find expression do vary considerably in different societies and economies, so that although marriage always carries some expression of Oedipal wishes, the kinship systems of, say, matrilineal India, patriarchal Arab societies, and the nuclear family of Western Europe each give a different expression to those wishes.

Marriage ritual, rites of passage, religious ceremonies and deities themselves all provide transparent representations of the Oedipal triangle in all cultures. Another, direct expression of the Oedipus complex is to be found in narrative structure as is demonstrated in chapter 1.

The controversy over the historical specificity of the Oedipus complex has existed since the earliest experiments in 'applied psychoanalysis'. In the 1920s the controversy between Ernest Jones and Bronislaw Malinowski, as to how to interpret ethnographic data on the kinship structure of south-west Melanesian society, was a test case in testing the psychoanalytic hypothesis of the universality of the Oedipus complex. Malinowski considered himself sympathetic to the Freudian view but following extensive fieldwork in Melanesia claimed that the data on the Melanesians disproved the hypothesis. Malinowski described a society in which there was no recognition, or no public recognition, of the role of the father in procreation, and in which the mother's brother, rather than the biological father, was in a position of social authority over the mother's sons. Since boys remained on friendly terms with their fathers, and were only submitted to the harsher authority of their uncles, Malinowski concluded that this matrilineal society had no Oedipus complex, and that the latter could be said to be restricted to patrilineal societies only. Following the presentation of the anthropological report to the scientific meeting of the British Psychoanalytic Society, Ernest Jones (the president of the Society at that time) offered a reinterpretation of Malinowski's data (7). He argued that the "sexual ignorance" of Melanesian society was apparent rather than real, and that the avunculate was used to split the Oedipal father into two figures, each representing one aspect of the son's ambivalent relation to him. Thus the

biological father retains affectionate bonds to his sons whilst the 'prohibitive father' image is projected onto the mother's brother. This institutionalised form of defence against overwhelming conflict demonstrates how social institutions can be used to take the part of the ego in maintaining identification, and is an example of the defence mechanism of splitting and projection. A rudimentary defence such as this is maintained at the cost of denial, in this case the denial of the knowledge of the facts of paternity. Jones argued that the matrilineal kinship system was a reaction to the Oedipus complex and not a socially prior form. Both Malinowski and Jones published their analyses of the data, and their theoretical arguments, and Malinowski eventually agreed with Jones' reinterpretation.

Wilhelm Reich also set out to show that the Oedipus complex was a product of a relatively recent, patrilineal, social structure, and that it is dependent on the western nuclear family of capitalism. A thorough critique of his hypotheses has been forwarded by Grunberger and Chassegret-Smirgel (8).

The first attempt to describe the Oedipus complex as it influences social structure, was Freud's book Totem and Taboo. This study also set out a history of the Oedipus complex, arguing that it evolved within a specific phase of human social reorganisation. Chapter 2 gives an account of the significance of Totem and Taboo in the overall pattern of Freud's work, and gives a historical account of the critical reception of this analysis of totemism. The

evolutionary paradigm of this aspect of applied psychoanalysis is outlined in relation to the conflicting interpretations of totemism. The evolutionary paradigm of this aspect of applied psychoanalysis is reassessed, and new evolutionary theory is used to replace the inaccurate and largely speculative is an example of the defence mechanism of splitting and projection. A rudimentary defence such as this is maintained at the cost of denial, in this case the denial of the knowledge of the facts of paternity. Jones argued that the matrilineal kinship system was a reaction to the Oedipus complex and not a socially prior form. Both Malinowski and Jones published their analyses of the data, and their theoretical arguments, and Malinowski eventually agreed with Jones' reinterpretation.

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evolutionary paradigm of this aspect of applied psychoanalysis is outlined in relation to the conflicting interpretations of totemism. The evolutionary paradigm of this aspect of applied psychoanalysis is reassessed, and new evolutionary theory is used to replace the inaccurate and largely speculative accounts available to Freud in 1918, so that the phylogenetic hypothesis, of a real event as the basis of the Oedipus complex, is fully reinstated. The concept of superego is explored with particular emphasis given to the function of superego as a vehicle of cultural transmission, the internalisation of prohibition, and the acquisition of syntax. The superego is presented as a concept describing the mechanism by which non-genetic transmission of knowledge is possible.

The effect of supplementing Freudian theory with contemporary theories of evolution is to fundamentally challenge the former's conceptualisation of gender. The definition of the Oedipus complex as something completely distinct from its pre-Oedipal components becomes an inaccurate description. Similarly, the Freudian emphasis on the father-and-son axis of the Oedipal struggle becomes a partial fragment of the overall triangular structure. In particular the historical roles of women, especially as mothers, is brought back into perspective. It is suggested that recognition of the maternal function is extraordinarily difficult in human culture and that this difficulty must be acknowledged before any significant changes can be made in the social position of women.

Chapter 1 discusses the existing political and historical theories which have been advanced in feminist theory and demonstrates how these might be usefully supplemented by the psychoanalytic historical perspective. Winnicott's account of the mother's contribution to society is used to explain the longevity of the misrecognition of the feminine function and the oppression of women. But although the historical perspective of psychoanalysis is different from that of Marxist 'historical materialism' and feminist social history, it is wrong to describe psychoanalytic interpretations of culture and society as ahistorical.

If it is only the form of the Oedipus complex that is liable to change with varying social formations and economic modes of production affecting the social organisation of the family, what is to be made of the immutability of its content? What kind of historical method emerges from the conjunction of economic, social and psychological materialisms? If psychoanalysis has seemed to be an ahistorical method when applied to problems from the social sciences and humanities this is mainly because it has been used, in traditional academic disciplines, as an adjunct of either Marx's historical materialism or of an idealist historical method. Both of these methods tend to sever the concept of mind from the concept of body in order to conceive of the psyche as a product of a system defined primarily in terms of either homo oeconomicus, or homo sapiens. Homo sapiens is a concept which is the direct product of the idealist doctrine of "cerebral primacy".

Engels was one of the earliest critics of the idealism inherent in this perspective on human evolution. In his paper 'On the Part played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man' in 1876 Engels applied the theory of dialectic to the question of the determining events in human prehistory and was led to suppose that, contrary to the belief of his contemporaries, it was the development of toolmaking that led to the comparative enlargement of the cerebellum rather than brain size predetermining toolmaking activity. Engels' rigorous use of informed speculation was recently proved right following revisions in evolutionary science (9). The prehistoric precursor of Marx's homo oeconomicus was, probably, Engels' homo faber.

We have seen that structuralism gives explanatory priority either to a homo symbolicus, of Durkheim's 'representations collectives' or to homo loquens, the speaking subject of a more Lacanian order. The history of these imaginary protagonists of a structuralist historical method is explored further in chapter 4, where the study of existing theories of the origins of writing and of the origin of language facilitates a more precise definition of the concept of prehistory. If history is defined as the existence of a surviving material record of a culture then history begins, potentially at least, with the invention of writing, some two thousand years BC in the Middle East.

For the Freudian theorist, the historical protagonist would be a homo infantilis, a term which has the disadvantage of reducing all unconscious phenomena to their

roots in extended human dependence on caretakers, but has the advantage of stressing a clear demarcation between the Freudian and the structuralist psychologies.

So how are we to formulate the interrelation of the histories of homo oeconomicus, homo symbolicans and homo infantilis? If each of these 'protagonists' has a different history, as dictated by the conceptual framework of their respective theoretical paradigms, which history is the most 'real', or the most adequate for describing 'reality'? To formulate the question along historical lines requires conceiving of a number of different time scales, each with its own tempo, rates of change, and laws of change. This then resolves some of the problems of using a spatial metaphor to think of base-superstructure, and the problem of two theories vying to describe the same object in contradictory conceptual terms.

A useful example of this is to be found in comparing the structuralist and psychoanalytic theories of narrative, discussed in chapter 1. There is also a growing literature on the concept of history as narrative, following the development of theoretical studies in narratology.

So far, examples of psychoanalytic material have been restricted to the analysis of manifestations of the Oedipus complex in various cultural forms. The Oedipus complex is a cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory, and Freud's Totem and Taboo argues the importance of the concept for a systematic and inclusive analysis of such social and religious forms as totemism, and, by extension, of all social institutions. But a more significant dynamic is

that of pre-Oedipal psychic structure, and although it is less well documented and understood, especially in its cultural and social manifestations, its effects are no less determining. To some extent the relation between pre-Oedipal and Oedipal psychic structure is discussed and argued throughout the thesis, particularly in chapter 1 in terms of feminist politics, and in chapter 4 in terms of the symbolisation of sexual difference. Having started from a position of social, or cultural, determinism, the thesis became an exploration of the possibilities produced by the theory of psychic determinism. If the meanings of gender difference are a product of unconscious phantasy as much as of social structure what use can be made of such knowledge?

The first chapter discusses the impact of psychic determinism on existing explanations of the social position of women. The questions of the historical axes of Marxism, semiotics and psychoanalysis are discussed in greater detail, in order to arrive at a concept of a history of sexual difference. The question of the status of intuitive knowledge vis-a-vis scientific method is also discussed so that the possibility of a "science of sexual difference" or a "feminist science" is proposed. An example of the knowledge produced by such a science is given in Winnicott's analysis of the meaning of woman in the unconscious, which raises new questions for feminist practice.

In the second chapter, a description of the dialectic between social reality and psychic reality is given.

Through the study of Freud's applied psychoanalysis in Totem and Taboo, and the history of its reception amongst anthropologists and social scientists, the contradictions between social science and psychoanalysis are explored.

The concept of superego is defined in terms of its historical, evolutionary, function and its necessity, as a critical concept for cultural analysis, is argued. As the site of the intersection of anatomical, linguistic, cultural and historical processes it provides a useful basis for understanding the meaning of political, social and cultural institutions.

The fourth chapter continues the exploration of the connection between superego and linguistic structures in relation to questions of the origins of symbol formation. The concept of origin is discussed and its romantic connotations analysed. Theories of the origin of speech and of the origin of writing are compared and a textual analysis of three "proto-symbolic", prehistoric scripts examines the symbolic representation of sexual difference across three societies. Certain similarities are noted, including the repeated association of female with metaphoric representation, with maternity, and being linked in a couple, and with 'internal' space. The symbolism of femininity and masculinity is related to the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal psychic processes. Controversies within the psychoanalytic theory of psychic determinism are explored with especial reference to the representation of gender and sexuality.

In the conclusion, the main arguments of the thesis are drawn from the research. In addition, a further example of the analysis of pre-Oedipal psychic processes in cultural and historical events is given. The dialectic of historical materialism, and psychic materialism as manifested in the anti-semitism of pre-war Germany is described and an analysis of racist ideology in contemporary Britain, in terms of its role as an institutionalised system of projection and denial, argues that deep fears of one's own aggression and sadism are denied by the national ideology, and are projected onto a group designated as alien through visible difference.

The analysis of racism as a system of culturally-condoned direction of cruelty, without guilt, towards a designated 'other' or culturally-designated scapegoat group is shown to be similar to that of sexism. And the analysis argues that the politics of feminism and of anti-racist struggle are inextricably linked.

The question of why it is so difficult to think about women is readdressed, and is considered in relation to the structures of knowledge and recognition in scientific and academic discourse. I contend that sexual difference is a fundamental reality which has a structuring effect on all systems of signification and representation.

Footnotes to Introduction

- 1 Totemism (London, Penguin, 1964), p.142. See also T. de Laurentis, 'Formal organisation and symbolic representation in Levi-Strauss', Discourse and Inference in Cognitive Anthropology, ed. M. Loflin and J. Silverberg (The Hague, Mouton, 1978).
- 2 'A Short Study of the Development of the Libido', Selected Papers (London, Hogarth, 1949), p.499.
- 3 Dictionary of Philosophy, (Moscow, Progress, 1984), p.130-131.
- 4 Evolution and The Diversity of Life, (Mass, Belknap, 1976), p.357-8.
- 5 Aristotle to Zoos, Medawar and Medawar (London, Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 199.
- 6 On Materialism, (London, New Left Books, 1975), p.62. Also discussed by M. Rustin in 'A Socialist Consideration of Kleinian Psychoanalysis' in New Left Review, 131, (1982), pp.71-96.
- 7 'On the Sexual Ignorance of Savages', International Journal of Psychoanalysis, Vol. VI, (1925), pp.109-130.
- 8 Freud or Reich, (London, Free Association, 1985). See also Social Relations and Human Attributes, P. Hirst and P. Woolley (London, Tavistock, 1980).
- 9 Discussed by S. Jay Gould, 'Posture Maketh the Man', Ever Since Darwin, (London, Penguin, 1980), pp.207-213. Original reference: Engels, 'One the Part played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man' in Dialectics of Nature, (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954).

What is the history of sexual difference?

The biological fact of the duality of the sexes emerges before us as a great enigma, something lost to our knowledge, defying any attempt at tracing it back to something else. Psychoanalysis did not contribute anything to the clarification of this problem. It obviously belongs as a whole to biology. Freud, 1938, (1).

If any analysis of female psychology is to take place it is high time that a decisive break was made, both with biologism in general and with the specific contribution it makes here: that a so-called biological dualism between the sexes is reflected in mental life. ... Biology is no longer relevant. In an important sense, on this question it has not been relevant since the foundation of human society. That foundation itself distinguished between the sexes. Mitchell, 1974 (2).

The opposition between these two views of the construction of difference expresses a controversy which underlies many conflicts in both psychology and feminism. In its widest, most inclusive form, the controversy can be held to include the differentiation between 'innate' and 'acquired' characteristics in biology or language learning; the opposition of conceptual categories of 'nature' and 'culture' in social anthropology; the differences between 'internal' and 'external' reality in philosophy and psychology; the ambiguity of 'organic' and 'environmental' determinants in the social sciences.

In this chapter I explore a number of the fields of enquiry in which this opposition exists, and suggest how these may contribute to the construction of a materialist theory of sexual difference, and of the cultural consequences of sexual difference. The controversy within psychoanalytic theory has been at the heart of the development of a general metapsychology, as sexual difference is understood to be an elementary fact in the

mental experience of the body. In classical Freudian theory the human capacity to conceptualise sexual difference has been understood to underlie the capacity to symbolise, to differentiate between 'internal' and 'external' reality, to recognise time and to use numbers, to differentiate between self and non-self, and to differentiate between external objects. Here the precise terms of the opposition between the classical and the feminist theory (as represented by Mitchell) become a matter of importance, and will be discussed in greater detail further on.

In the field of linguistics, the opposition between 'innate' and 'acquired' aspects of language has created ambiguity in the conceptualisation of 'competence' and 'performance' as different aspects of language. Connected with this, as Kristeva has shown, there is ambiguity in the concept of the speaker/hearer's intuition used, by linguistic science, as the sole criterion of the correctness or incorrectness of grammatical form (3). The many conflicts in theories of language acquisition, and the inevitable overlap between linguistics and psychology in formulating a developmental account of the acquisition of syntax, demonstrate the contradiction inherent in the conceptual categories of classical linguistics. Kristeva's theory, which suggests that objective knowledge of human capacities, such as language, cannot exist without an integral theory of subjectivity, is discussed and is used as one example of the necessary self-reflexivity of feminist thought.

In a parallel field, structural anthropology, there have been many recent applications of the binary opposition 'nature' and culture' to the problematic of gender roles in culture. Some of the hypotheses forwarded by Orther (1974), Ardner (1975), Rubin (1975), MacCormack (1980), and Jordanova and Brown (1981) are discussed, along with the sociology of Hirst and Woolley (1979).

In philosophy and theology, the debates on the differences between 'internal' and 'external' reality have been too numerous to specify, except as forerunners of the theories of culture and gender discussed here. One contemporary theory of the history and philosophy of science maintains that the differentiation between internal and external is fundamental to science, (Popper, 1975, 1977) and the philosophy of science is of direct use in formulating questions for a theory of ideology.

The many feminisms that have emerged over the last fifteen years have broadened the scope of cultural analysis and have helped to define, more clearly, the question of sexual difference as it impinges on social structure. At present, a number of very divergent currents can be charted within the overall field of feminist theory. Insofar as these all posit some theory of the relation of sexual difference to society and culture, these feminisms could be shown to imply a theory of subjectivity and ideology. I explore the Althusserian theory of ideology, particularly its twin concepts of reproduction (the aim of all ideological processes) and of history, in order to connect a number of feminist insights.

Methods of enquiry and forms of knowledge

Whilst Freud and Mitchell locate sexual difference quite differently, in relation to biology, they both locate biology itself as an "elsewhere". For Freud it is a fundamental basis of psychoanalysis, an irreducible matrix which intervenes in mental phenomena in a number of forms. For Mitchell it is an unnecessary encumbrance, from which psychoanalysis can be delivered, by the coupling of linguistics and anthropology. The irreconcilable divergence between them nevertheless emanates from a similar starting point; each posits the field of biology as alien, an "elsewhere", outside of the corpus of psychoanalytic thought. Perhaps, to reverse the metaphor, a foreign body in the systematic formulation of psychological processes.

I shall argue that sociological and political theories also tend to project the body as an "elsewhere", as a factor alien to their central concerns. This process has an intellectual variant which is most clearly manifested in the contemporary construction of (and fear of) a category, "biological reductionism" or "essentialism", which acts as a severe constraint on thinking in the social sciences and in cultural analysis. The process of projection also has a number of psychological and social variants, racism and sexism, which will be analysed alongside the intellectual and theoretical forms.

If it is possible to build an integrated theory of the cause, effect, social and historical organisation of sexual

difference, this will require an unusual amount of interdisciplinary thought. The different fields of enquiry onto which the question impinges, such as psychoanalysis, anthropology, Marxism, feminism, have different theoretical and conceptual bases and different methods. Not even the overall theory of structuralism has been able successfully to mediate the epistemic conflicts that arise from these differences.

At first sight the conflicts would seem to arise from the 'gaps' between the conceptual bases, such as the fundamentally synchronic methods of contemporary ethnologies for example. On closer investigation it appears that the conflicts arise more from the conceptual convergence of these fields. For example, in the following chapter I explore the considerable overlap between the objects of psychoanalysis and social anthropology. Some of the customs, rituals and symbolism described and explained by anthropologists are also described and, differently, explained by psychoanalysis. A convenient way of avoiding the conflict arising from this overlap has been to designate the anthropological field as the study of the social, and the psychological as the study of the individual, but this is both inaccurate and misleading. The conflicts arising from the descriptions of the "incest taboo" and "Oedipus complex" as human universals are particularly significant. Or, to take a slightly different example, some of the processes described in the Freudian metapsychology as 'instinctual impulses', 'drives' or

'instincts' may also be described within the concepts of language of neuro-biology in terms of certain biochemical processes, although neither of these objects completely describes the other.

So, although it is important to maintain a sense of the differences between the concepts and language of psychoanalysis, anthropology, linguistics, and Marxism, we nevertheless have to give up the idea of them as completely autonomous disciplines, with each producing completely distinct theories about distinct objects. Certainly there is nothing to be gained by erasing the differences between these fields, nor from overlooking the differences of their terminologies and their histories. But the object of our investigation, sexual difference, requires an interdisciplinary method which means that we have to think about bridging the gaps between them and about recognising overlaps between them.

Discussing the philosophy of biology, Francois Jacob notes that:

There exists today a series of sciences that differ not only by the nature of the objects that are studied, but also by the concepts and language that are used. These sciences can be arranged in a certain order that corresponds to the hierarchy of the complexity found in the objects of these sciences ... In order to obtain a unified world view through science the question has repeatedly been raised as to the possibility of making bridges between adjacent disciplines ... Important advances in the history of sciences often come from bridging the gaps between them. (4)

Jacob stresses that although "every proposition that is true for physics is also true for chemistry, biology or sociology" (5), that it is nevertheless impossible to

reduce the axioms on the sciences of complex objects to those underlying them in the hierarchy, which is why the psychoanalytic concepts of drives, of sexuality or of aggression cannot ultimately be represented in physics or chemistry. Complex objects have to be analysed at all levels, which means distinguishing effectively between the objects of each science.

The debates from the philosophy of science are especially useful for establishing precision in the use of terms such as 'science'. Kuhn (1977) rejects Popper's (1959) invocation of falsifiability as the primary criterion for any proposition to be considered truly scientific. Kuhn's criterion is the shared capacity of a community of professionals to solve certain kinds of puzzles or questions. This shared problematic he terms a paradigm, and characterises the history of science as a series of paradigm shifts. But whether we are justified in using his concept of a paradigm to describe any of the more complex sciences is doubtful. Kuhn himself objects to this extended usage of the term (6). Although psychoanalysis is not viewed as a scientific paradigm by Kuhn, there are theorists of psychoanalysis as science who have found his work useful for describing it as such (7).

Whilst it is possible to make quite clear demarcations between the objects, concepts and languages of the physical sciences, and to order them hierarchically, this is not possible in the same way for the social sciences. In fact the general ambiguity and overlapping between the range of social and behavioural sciences gives rise to a special

kind of anxiety, such as has been described by Edmund Leach as arising from ambiguity in classification (8). One solution to absence of absolutes in conceptual demarcation in the social sciences has been the attempt to reduce the differences between discourses to zero, thereby making the overlap complete, and 'reducing' one science to another. Alternatively, a movement in the opposite direction is possible, so that all overlap is unacknowledged, or denied, and a discipline is assumed to be autonomous, thereby fragmenting the sense of unification or interrelation between sciences. These processes raise the old philosophical problem of 'reductionism' in science, which is discussed earlier.

It has often been noted that in all scientific study of human beings, other than the study of humans as physical and chemical systems, in other words in all study of 'human nature', we find a further overlap between the object and the observer. It may be this complication of the observer's objectivity that results in the social and behavioural sciences being known as the 'soft' sciences, and acknowledgement of the affective responses which impinge on the neutrality of the information gathered. Devereux (9) notes that this overlap is ineradicable in the behavioural sciences and that it generates anxiety which should lead us to analyse the division between object and observer. Devereux has produced a critique of experimental psychology, noting that it seeks to deny the significance of the overlap, to eradicate knowledge of the partiality of the relation of communication between subject and observer

by overemphasising the importance of method and of quantifiable data. The anxiety produced in the observer generates what Devereux terms "counter transference resistances" which, he suggests, "tend to masquerade as methodology, causing further sui generis distortions":

... behavioural science data arouse anxieties which are warded off by a counter transference-inspired pseudo-methodology; this manoeuvre is responsible for nearly all the defects of behavioural science. I do not advocate the elimination of filters, I urge only the elimination of the illusion that they abolish all subjectivity and neutralise anxiety. They only displace and postpone these. (10).

Devereux's method of research entails the more or less systematic attempt to compensate for this partiality of the communication between subject and observer on a conscious level through four stages, and to try and avoid overcompensating on an unconscious level. Rather than emulating the procedures of the physical sciences, which leads to an inappropriate reification of quantifiability, Devereux proposes a general scientific method, with interdisciplinary validity, using what is specific to the situation of the behavioural sciences. Thus, since the overlap between subject and observer is ineradicable, and since it causes 'disturbances' for the observer, Devereux proposes that we use these 'disturbances' as the most significant and characteristic data of research. In his words, "we must use the subjectivity inherent in all observation as the 'royal road' to an authentic rather than fictitious objectivity" (11). The four steps outlined by Devereux are:

- 1 "A scrutiny of the matrix of meanings in which relevant data are embedded";
- 2 "A study of the scientist's personal involvement";
- 3 "A comprehension of the nature and locus of the partition between subject and observer";
- 4 "The provisional acceptance, acknowledgement and exploitation of the observer's subjectivity" (12).

Although it is necessary to devise principles for the theory of a general scientific method (as Devereux terms it), the application of these principles can only take place with reference to a specific object and discourse. Devereux's own application of the method is to anthropology and psychology, but the potential application of human sciences has important implications for all forms of cultural analysis. All empirical and observational studies would be rendered infinitely more complex, requiring a more scrupulous self-reflexivity on the part of the observer. The constraints imposed on the objectivity of empirical research would be more than compensated by the increase in research on subjectivity. And without reducing all research into external objects to the status of solipsism, the study of the scientist's "personal involvement" in the process of investigation itself would lead to momentous changes in the traditional methods of enquiry and forms of knowledge. This kind of change has very specific significance for the cultural meaning of gender.

A self-reflexive science of language?

One example of the critique of the disembodied "objective" observer of scientific discourse can be found in Kristeva's studies of linguistics.

In its development in the work of Julia Kristeva, semiology is conceived as a critical science, a practice perpetually displacing its object and itself in a theoretical activity that operates a ceaseless destruction of the whole ideology of representation. Heath, 1973, (13).

Although the influence of Kristeva's work has probably been widest in the study of literature and literary theory, it has much to offer as a critique of disembodied metalanguage. Recently her theories have been widely disseminated and discussed (Heath, 1973, 1979, Moi, 1985, Belsey, 1979, Jardine, 1981, Rose, 1982, Duchon, 1985, Cameron 1981, Berg and Berry, 1979) and criticised (Adams and Brown 1978, Hall, 1978, White 1980). Her work is sometimes grouped with that of Jakobson, Benveniste, Ducrot, Barthes, and Greimas as a "linguistics of parole" (Pêcheux, 1975), differentiated from the "historical" linguistics of Labov, Bernstein and Cohen, and also from the "formal" linguistics of Chomsky, Lakoff and the theories of transformational grammar.

Certainly Kristeva's work is concerned with the language of style, poetics, rhetoric, dialogue, image and their context in rule-bound or transgressive processes; but her work is also difficult to classify because of its changes over the past twenty years. Her first work on the history of language and linguistics (Joyaux, 1969) led to a compendious study of the semiology of literature (Kristeva, 1974) and the role of "poetic function". Later work

focusses on a broad range of text analyses of literature, painting, film and music, on the critique of the epistemological 'apparatus' of scientific discourse, and on integrating psychoanalysis with semiology (Kristeva, 1979, 1985).

The early critique of formal linguistics, such as we find in 'Du sujet en linguistique' (1971), aimed at replacing the concept of the unitary field of scientific discourse with a concept of "un ensemble d'articulations". The starting point is the idea that in all formal linguistics the conceptualisation of an object language, such as 'langue' for Saussure or the 'deep structures' of syntax for Chomsky, logically precedes the formulation of the theory itself. Kristeva notes that the 'projection' of such an object contains within it an implicit definition of the speaking subject, both the ideal speaker/hearer as described by the theory, and a subjectivity implicit in what Devereux calls the position of the 'observer'. Kristeva argues that the coherence and the degree of closure of a theory (closure in the mathematical sense) is the product of a contradiction within the observing subject which is involved in a double process of theorising and of reproducing itself as self. In other words, Kristeva is describing on an institutional level what Devereux, in the second of his four steps towards scientific method, recommends on a personal level, the analysis of the scientist's involvement. Kristeva describes the contradiction of the linguist as a 'denial' or 'foreclosure' of subjectivity, depending on where the partition between subject and object is conceived as being

located. Saussure's division of signifier and signified by the 'bar' which separates them in his schema is classified as implying a suspended or 'denied' subject, whereas the Chomskyan concept of 'intuition', which plays an important part in providing closure for the theory of syntax, is classified as implying a foreclosure of subjectivity. In other words, it is because linguistics studies language apart from the speakers that use it, (or are used by it), because it studies language as, for example, a mechanism for the production of sentences, that Kristeva analyses it as a language itself. There have been critiques of the transformational grammar that have arrived at similar conclusions through pursuing different routes, exploring, for example, why the theory cannot account for the poetic or metaphoric use of language (Jackson, 1975), or why the rules governing the use of negation are so difficult to systematize. Comparing Saussure's concept of parole, Chomsky's concept of the part played by 'intuition' in performance, and Sapir's concept of the "consciousness of the speaking subject", Kristeva notes that although they each refer to different parts of language, they have in common the fact that they each serve to produce an 'object' language from the lacuna that takes the place of the subject of metalanguage. Giving a schematic account of the kinds of subjectivity implied by the various languages of linguistics, Kristeva proposes:

LANGUAGE	SUBJECT
1 Metalanguage	Foreclosed subject
2 System or object (langue)	Suspended or denied subject
3 An inexplicable signifying economy, not integrated into the theory (poetry, metaphor, Saussure's anagrams)	Divided subject, acknowledged as divided by the signifier
4 A reference to subjectivity, (parole) which remains un- integrated in theory and thus produces a lacuna in theory.	An unknown subject X in the place of the Cartesian subject.

For Kristeva the language capable of describing these subjectivities is that of psychoanalysis, particularly Lacanian theory, and she suggests points at which the latter could be used to inform Chomsky's theory. For example, whilst the problem of the psychological 'realisation' of grammars has been left to one side (Brennan, 1979), the grammatical characterisation of syntax has shown that the mechanism for generating sentences has a series of universal rules, including recursivity, embedding, repetition and the cyclical application of certain rules. The acquisition of these rules takes place between the ages of two years and about thirteen years, "from the mirror stage to puberty" as Kristeva puts it. Language acquisition studies (Lenneberg, 1967) have shown that shortly after the age of two there is a halt in learning which is often followed by a period of unlearning, and this stage is often thought to mark the point at which the lateralisation of the brain is irreversibly effected and "at which the subject is already actualised through the splitting, alienation and duplication through the image or

specular other. The acquisition of syntax and the possibility of innovatory use of language presupposes the position of such a split "I". Syntax consolidates this subject, split in the signifier" (14). Whilst being careful to point out the limitations of applying Lacanian theory to Chomsky's linguistics, Kristeva suggests that the mechanism governing the use of syntax and closure should be thought in relation to the formation of the specular ego, and its particular subject topography (its drives, objects and Other). A more developmental approach is outlined by Edgcumbe (1979).

Kristeva suggests that if linguistics is to be an explanatory science rather than a descriptive one it must now open up the space of the Cartesian subject which it has unquestioningly maintained and must begin to define the topologies that produce subjectivity in language:

The articulation of these productive topologies would constitute the explanatory basis for the description that is at present covered by the term 'intuition'. The theory proposed is one which is attuned to the Saussurian aims of describing the economy of the signifier, as well as the Chomskyan discovery of syntactic mechanisms but is above all informed by psychoanalysis and its Lacanian developments. (15).

So the linguistics thus constructed would be both descriptive and explanatory, representing rather than denying the heterogeneous contradiction at the centre of theoretical metalanguage. Providing unity without artificial closure it would fulfil the demands of a materialist analysis of signifying systems. Kristeva suggests that the deep structures to be described would therefore need to be not only the mechanisms of syntax

already proposed by generative grammar but also the following topologies:

- an M mechanism - describing modal processes already characterised by linguistics;
- an S mechanism - tracing the primary processes in the condensations and displacements of the signifier;
- and a mechanism - tracing the topos of the speaking subject.

It is not evident from Kristeva's study what kinds of data would be admissible for such a theory, nor what sorts of verification would be appropriate. No doubt the empirical study of language acquisition in infants and children, if it were to be correlated with the psychic development such as the mirror stage and the formation of the imaginary ego, would necessitate a project on a scale similar to John Bowlby's study of the effects of separation and loss (1960). Kristeva's own application of the theory has been mostly to textual analysis, analysing texts in terms of the unconscious primary processes, infantile fantasy, and the containment of these within symbolic codes.

More recently Kristeva's method has led her to analyse texts on a number of levels, seeing a text as the articulation of a number of separate but interconnecting instances of production. On a first level, texts are signifying systems, and can be studied synchronically, in terms of their deep structures, the semiotic langue or their syntax. Analyses of painting, music and film discuss the extent to which these forms can be considered to be language or language-like structures.

Secondly, every signifying system is a product of a particular historical moment with a specific mode of production, in Marxist terms, which will be manifest in the text, legible either directly (through the effects, for instance, of an author's patronage), or indirectly through the influences of the religion, morality, the aesthetic and social codes of a rising or dominant class, in short, through its ideology.

At a third level, a text is determined by subjectivity, as described above in the discussion of linguistics. Again, psychoanalytic theory is used to account for the unconscious determinants of a text, examining the relation of language to the speaking subject and to the contents of the unconscious. The concept of the 'semiotic chora' was introduced in La Revolution du Langage Poetique (1974) to account for the effect of unconscious processes in texts by differentiating between two aspects of the signifying system. Contrasted to the Symbolic aspect of the system, which contains those aspects of language readily encoded within the terms of formal semiology and linguistics, the syntactic, thetic, aspects of language, the 'semiotic chora' contains the levels at which meaning is derived from connotative processes such as prosody, rhyming, punning and rhythm, the 'transgressive' aspects of language. The separation of the Symbolic and Semiotic levels of language is purely abstract for the two are thoroughly intertwined in practice, and separable only for the purposes of analysis. Coding is necessarily selective, and there would be no excess or transgression if not for the existence of

the rule. (This particular use of the term semiotic is also to be differentiated from the use of the term semiotics to describe the structural analysis of signifying systems as founded by C S Pierce. The first is used as an adjective, the second as a noun; as an adjective it qualifies the text, describing a quality of the text).

If subjectivity is to be included in the problematic of the text this automatically changes the status of the text from being a static object, a signifying 'system' or 'economy' to being a practice, a process (designated by Kristeva as signifiance). The concept of practice implies an additional historical dimension to the conceptualisation of the object.

The interconnection of the three levels of textual analysis noted above can clearly be seen in Kristeva's idea of the 'triple register' of the sign (Kristeva, 1972). Discussing the signifying systems of pictorial representation, Kristeva proposes that a sign is always produced simultaneously on three axes, analogous to the three levels of textual analysis. The axis of the symbolic implicates the sign within a signifying system whose codes and internal rules can be described by semiotic or linguistic analysis. The historical axis is to be explored through historical materialism, and the subjective through psychoanalysis.

[It describes] a fundamental problem, namely the inclusion of a signifying economy within a social context. By its very nature, artistic practice is doubly articulated: through the inclusion of a signifying economy within an objective ideological functioning; and through the production of meaning through its subject, in terms of (and liable to the

constraints of) concrete social contradictions. In other words, a (subjective) signifying economy becomes an artistic signifying practice only to the extent that it is articulated through the social struggles of a given age. Along such lines, I might suggest that the sociopolitical and ideological position of the artist within the contradictions of his time ultimately determines a concrete signifying economy, turning it into an artistic practice that will play a given social and historical role. A signifying economy within an artistic practice, therefore, not only operates through the individual (biographical subject) who carries it out, but it also recasts him as historical subject - causing the signifying process that the subject undergoes to match the ideological and political expectations of his age's rising classes ... One cannot understand such practice without taking its socio-economic foundations into account; nor can one understand it if one chooses to reduce it solely to these foundations, thereby bypassing the signifying economy of the subject involved. (16).

The problematic described here remains Kristeva's basic framework, although questions of historical materialism have been increasingly replaced by those of subjectivity, so that transference rather than class struggle becomes seen as the central contradiction of history (Kristeva, 1985). As suggested earlier, Kristeva's work is not limited to literary theory, as it has importance for the question of the method of general science. In particular the problem of relating the discoveries on the nature of syntax to the explanatory theory of psychoanalysis remains fertile territory. In chapter 3 the Freudian concept of superego is discussed in relation to syntax and the auditory sphere. This kind of integrated approach provides new ways of conceptualising history and the transmission of culture.

History, self-reflexivity and the science of sexual difference

It has been argued that the new problematic of subjectivity requires a redefinition of science as a practice, where the latter emphasises the active involvement of the scientist within a paradigm and within a subjective matrix of meaning. Kristeva's work, and Devereux's critique of psychology, indicate that self-reflexivity in the human sciences leads away from emulation of the methods of the physical or exact sciences, and towards a method which is akin to that of psychoanalysis. The need for maintaining the specificity of each object, concept and language of each of the component discourses in an interdisciplinary study has to be borne in mind alongside the need for an integrated and internally coherent method. As Winnicott has put it, "To plan our lives we need science. But science boggles at the problem of human nature and tends to lose sight of the whole human being." (1965).

This question of contextualising scientific enquiry within a broader context, which began with Kuhn's contestation of Popper, has most effectively been elaborated in terms of the sociology of knowledge. Increasingly, the philosophy of science has become the sociology or history of science, and this is one crucial dimension to the redefinition of science as practice. However it is the axis of subjectivity which can contribute most to clarifying the way in which scientific knowledge is implicated in a matrix of gendered meanings.

To approach the problem defined earlier, of the

relative autonomy of adjacent disciplines within the social sciences, from a historical perspective is one way of 'triangulating' the rivalrous structure of "narcissistic quarrels about jurisdictional spheres" (Devereux, 1957). The anxiety arising from the ambiguity of demarcation between the boundaries of these disciplines, such as is visible in the interface between psychology and anthropology could be said to have some root in the "narcissism of minor differences", and the narcissistic battle, usually with an Imaginary other, for primacy and dominance can be most easily resolved when the third term of 'history' stabilises the conceptual structure. In this case the history is the history of culture, the history of the Oedipus complex, which is generally thought of as cultural 'pre-history'.

Similarly, if we explore the Lacanian project of "emancipating" Freudianism from its interdependence on biology we find another contradiction. Mitchell states:

Jacques Lacan dedicated himself to the task of re-finding and reformulating the work of Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalytic theory today is a variegated discipline. There are contradictions within Freud's writings and subsequent analysts have developed one aspect and rejected another, thereby using one theme as a jumping-off point for a new theory. Lacan conceived his own project differently: despite the contradictions and impasses, there is a coherent theorist in Freud whose ideas do not need to be diverged from: rather they should be set within a cohesive framework that they anticipated but which, for historical reasons, Freud himself could not formulate. The development of linguistic science provides this framework. (Mitchell, 1982) (17).

Now, as we have seen, linguistics is no less a variegated discipline than psychoanalysis, and it is hard to see how it can be called upon to provide the scientific framework for the latter. The Lacanian model, for example,

does not use the discoveries of generative grammar, and, moreover, its integration of structural linguistics with the metapsychology is carried out very much at the expense of the economic, libidinal, standpoint of psychoanalysis. The new "improved" psychoanalysis proposed by Mitchell is a metapsychology reduced to a topographical theory alone. By erasing the question of instincts, the "emancipation" from biology is felt to be successful, and psychoanalysis is thereby given an illusory autonomy. This makes it possible for Mitchell to combine the theory more easily with historical materialism, which has traditionally constituted the feminist theory of the oppression of women (De Beauvoir, 1949).

Moreover, biology too is a variegated discipline and not all of the psychoanalytic references to biology tout court are aimed at the kind of functional biology which Mitchell is afraid will haunt psychoanalysis in the form of 'biologism'. There is, according to Mayr, another side to biological theory which is its historical, evolutionary aspect; and this ultimately provides the scientific framework for psychoanalysis. Before exploring the possible contributions that evolutionary biology can make to our understanding of the social organisation of sexual difference we shall return to the question of historical materialism and its longstanding relationship with feminist analysis.

Starting from the premise that women, under capitalism, are exploited not only as wage labourers but also through the unique position they occupy in the family as unpaid labourers, feminist analysis has drawn the focus of Marxist

analysis towards the problem of conceptualising the family and its role in political economy. Early texts like Engels' The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State, based on faulty anthropological speculation (18), soon discredited the evolutionary approach to the question, and contemporary analyses have focussed on redefining the sphere of reproduction and the contradictory role of the family via-a-vis the sphere of production. A small number of feminist analyses have returned to Engels' analysis as providing the basis of a feminist materialism (Sacks 1974, 1975, Rubin 1975, Leacock 1972, Reed 1972, 1975). More commonly feminist theory has focused on trying to locate the political economy of women in relation to capitalist labour relations and history (Rowbotham 1972, 1979, Mitchell 1971, 1974, Barrat 1979, Wolpe and Kuhn 1979 are a few representative texts of the Marxist feminism in Britain), and a number have tried to locate women's unpaid domestic labour as a central contributory factor to surplus value (Secombe 1974, Dalla Costa and James 1972, Gardiner 1975, Coulson, Magas and Wainwright 1975, Molyneux 1979, Delphy 1977, Smith 1979) thus locating the contradictions of gender as central to those of class. But more recently the emphasis has shifted from the analysis of the economic level of capitalism to the level of determinate social formations and their reproduction and particularly to the level of ideology as a material, although not necessarily economic, part of the social formation. Classical Marxism defines historical materialism as "that view of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic

development of society, in the changes in the mode of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of those classes against one another." (Engels, 1892) (19), or with modifications:

According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis but the various elements of the superstructure - political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas - also exercise their influence upon the course of historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amidst all the endless host of accidents ... the economic moment finally asserts itself as necessary. (Engels, 1890) (20).

The question of the extent to which superstructural forms may influence or determine economic development has been taken up by several contemporary Marxist theorists, and it is to these that feminism has turned to find ways of theorising the specificity of women's struggles, and the history of the family.

Although historical materialism has been successfully applied to social and physical anthropology (Godelier 1973, Meillasoux 1979, Sahlins 1960a, 1972, 1977) it is difficult to ascertain whether or not it is compatible with structural anthropology of the Levi-Straussian school. (21). Marx is cited as an intellectual antecedent of

structural analysis but the concept of history as myth, paradigm or code is contradictory to historical materialism (22). Badcock (1975) maintains that the theory of the primacy of exchange relations, which is central in Levi-Strauss' conceptualisation of the social totality, precludes its compatibility with a theory of the primacy of production. Meillasoux (1979) describes the contradiction between kinship and mode of production as distinct levels of analysis: "Thus to reproduce itself the capitalist mode of production depends on an institution which is alien to it, but which it has until now maintained as that most adapted to this function, and also the most economical, on account of its using unpaid - particularly female - labour, and by exploiting the emotional attachment which still dominates parent and child relations." (23). It has been in order to understand more precisely the nature of the relation between institutional form of the family, its subjective reality as powerful emotional attachment, and its objective relation to the economic base, that feminism has turned to Althusser's theory of ideology.

Ideology in general and the idea of an omni-historical reality

Althusser has provided a theory which is useful for rethinking the role of reproduction. At its most basic level, this theory could be said to define the specificity of Marxist philosophy - that is, of both dialectical and historical materialism - in terms of a structuralist problematic which he draw from Marx's Capital and the works of Lenin and Mao-Tse Tung. The description 'structuralist' must be used with some qualification since Althusser has defined it as "an ideology peculiar to the human sciences, one of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois philosophies of ethical idealism (humanism) which threaten Marxist theory" (24).

Althusser's aims are partly polemical, and he speaks to a specific historical moment in the history of the French Communist party: the effect of the end of Stalinism in the Soviet Union on the ideology of socialism amongst party members and intellectuals in France. The critique of Stalinism, in the late 1950s and early 1960s was used by many European Communist parties as a 'liberation', which led to a re-emergence of humanism. Intellectual humanism then seemed to have political support, and the scientific analysis of social formations was being impeded. So it was in such an intellectual climate that Althusser, returning to Marx, identified three distinct periods in the latter's work. The first two: the writing up to, and including, the The German Ideology, 1845, and the work from 1845 to 1857, seemed to Althusser to exist in sharp differentiation from

the work after 1858 - largely consisting of Capital. Drawing on Bachelard's work on the epistemology of science, Althusser identifies an 'epistemological break' between the first two periods and the third; that is, up until 1858 Marx's work is a pre-scientific humanism, and from Capital onwards it focuses primarily on the analysis of social relations. Briefly, Althusser's use of Marx's theory is the application of the scientific method which is identified in Capital to the problem of the ideological level of the social formation.

The four main themes of his work are:

- 1) practice as the basic unit of analysis
- 2) the idea of a structure in dominance
- 3) the concepts of contradiction and overdetermination, and
- 4) the problem of reproduction.

We shall examine these in turn. 'Practice' is used to describe "all significant action", it is "a process of transformation of a determinate given raw material into a determinate product, a transformation effected by a determinate human labour, using determinate means (of production)" (25). All practice has a tripartite form (object, means, product) and Althusser's emphasis is on the fact of the ongoing transformation, the process, rather than on the specificity of the raw material, the means, or the product. Four different types of practice are distinguished, one, the economic/material practice, in which nature is transformed into use values and exchange values; two, political practice in which social relations are transformed into state power (which is used either to

maintain the unity of the status quo or to create revolutionary forms), three, ideological practice, in which one form of lived relation is transformed into another through ideological struggle, and four, theoretical practice, in which knowledge is transformed into science. Controversy exists over the question of whether theoretical practice should be considered to be inside or outside of the social formation, and part of ideological practice; however Althusser has stressed the relative autonomy of each practice in relation to the others and there is good cause for retaining a sense of the specificity of each.

Rather than existing as a separate theme, reproduction is central to the theory of ideology in all its aspects. What was described by Engels as the motor force of history, the need to produce and reproduce the conditions of existence, is here used to locate the main task of ideological practice: to maintain the reproduction of the conditions required for production to continue. Althusser's conceptualisations of ideology changed in the course of his work; in the earlier phase, as in 'Marxism and Humanism', ideology is analysed as an objective level of social reality, as consisting of representations (intelligible through their structure). Rather than reading ideology from discrete representations and images, "it is their system, their mode of combination and disposition which give them sense and function". In the second phase, a distinction is drawn between science and ideology; in some places an opposition is made between ideological and theoretical practice. Althusser also

distinguishes between the theory of particular ideologies and the theory of ideology in general, stressing the need for a materialist analysis of ideology as an omni-historical reality. The later formulations, drawn from his essays in self-criticism, include ideology as "the representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" and the idea that ideology "interpellates" individuals as subjects. The shift is from the objective to the subjective existence of ideology, with the analysis of representational structures appearing as a midway point.

As an objective level of the social formation, ideology is seen as existing in relative autonomy from the other two component spheres, although the economic is determinate in the last instance. A further attempt at correlating state and political power with the ideological forms can be found in the well-known concepts of Repressive State Apparatuses and the Ideological States Apparatuses. Whereas the former use overt forms of power, military and police forces or juridical enforcements to maintain social relations statu quo, the latter, working much less visibly, cannot be so easily defined. These institutions are dependent on the voluntary participation of individuals who feel themselves addressed by their discourse, and who are thus interpellated as subjects of such institutional identity. These discourses each offer us a different representation of our relation to our real conditions of existence, and we voluntarily misrecognise ourselves in such representations, feeling ourselves addressed by them. These then are the

three main theses on ideology - that it is a representation (system of representation) of imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence, - that it interpellates individuals as subjects, and that it has a material existence, independent of economy.

Althusserians have developed the first of these theses by using theories of misrepresentation, linguistics and semiotics, such as in Barthes' Mythologies (26) or as seen in Kristeva's work above. Further research into the nature of the 'imaginary' has led to the integration of Lacanian theory, particularly the mirror phase theory, (27). The second thesis has realised the question of the nature of interpellation and has again used the Lacanian concept of the 'entry into the Symbolic' as the condition for full subjectivity. It also raises questions pertaining to the philosophical definitions of subjectivity and human agency and structuralist theory.

It is the third thesis that most directly concerns our exploration of the place of history in relation to sexual difference. Not only does Althusser differentiate his theory from Marx's concept of ideology as 'false consciousness', by stressing that there can be no practice except in and through ideological practice, since the latter is an inextricable component of representation, but he also maintains that ideology will, therefore, never disappear, go away, or be replaced by the 'real' representation. Insofar as ideology is analogous to language and is coterminous with it, it has an 'extra'-historical or omni-historical reality. This seems to be an

important step in conceiving of the history of human society without reproducing the inaccuracies of humanism. In what way is such a history conceived by Althusser?

On the one hand, I think it is possible to hold that ideologies have a history of their own (although it is determined in the last instance by the class struggle); and on the other, I think it is possible to hold that ideology in general has no history, not in the negative sense (that its history is external to it), but in an absolutely positive sense.

The sense is a positive one if it is true that the peculiarity of ideology is that it is endowed with a structure and a functioning such as to make it a non-historical reality, i.e. an omni-historical reality, in the sense in which the structure and functioning are immutable, present in the same form throughout what we call history ... i.e. the history of class societies.

... our proposition that ideology has no history can and must be directly related to Freud's proposition that the unconscious is eternal, i.e. that it has no history.

Ideology is eternal, exactly like the unconscious. And I add that I find this comparison theoretically justified by the fact that the eternity of the unconscious is not unrelated to the eternity of ideology in general. That is why I believe I am justified, hypothetically at least, in proposing a theory of ideology in general. (28).

Althusser's problematic, and his suggestion that psychoanalysis and historical materialism should be linked in some form has been taken up by several theorists over the past fifteen years. Not only the work of Tel Quel, Kristeva, Barthes, the French Marxist feminists, Psych et Po, but also, in Britain, work of Theoretical Practice, Screen, the New Left Review, Ideology and Consciousness, m/f, Feminist Review and writing by Brewster, MacCabe, Heath, Rose, Mitchell, Anderson, Wollen, Mulvey, Coward and Ellis, and Hirst and Woolley, has responded to Althusser's theory. For the most part these responses have been directed to the first and second of the theses on ideology, the synchronic issues concerning the status of

subjectivity, or the definition of systems of representation. Where the third thesis, on the history of ideology has been broached, there has been a tendency to assume that psychoanalysis has little to contribute to the conceptualisation of such a history; which has resulted in some unsatisfactory links being made between the concept of the unconscious and that of ideology. For example, MacCabe suggests that:

Psychoanalysis is a necessary component of historical materialism in the knowledge it produces of the construction of the subject, the latter being understood as that unity of consciousness which classical philosophy takes as the founding disposition of the world ... the virulence with which psychoanalysis rejects such a primacy has ensured it both the undying enmity of those who long for a final moment of communion when consciousness will become one, and the living gratitude of those who see it as marking an irreversible break with all idealism and religion. (29).

Certainly psychoanalysis does mark an irreversible break with idealism and religion, and can provide a critique of the Cartesian ego, as cogito, but rather than trying to build it into the theory of ideology as a component of historical materialism I suggest that we have to uncover the concept of history on which psychoanalysis bases itself, and to see what interdependence is possible between the theories of ideology and the unconscious. Where sacrifices have had to be made, in order to create links between the two theories, it seems that it has usually been the psychoanalytic theory that has been compromised. For example in 1929 one psychoanalyst-teacher commented on the fate of Freudian theory in the universities:

There is, among the teaching body, a certain limited demand for practical knowledge of psychoanalysis. On the other hand, in respect to theory, a certain disadvantageous development has shown itself in many quarters: namely the acceptance of certain small portions shorn of real significance and applied alongside entirely opposing ideas. Again we see here the traditional English attitude of compromising with a new truth too profound, and possibly too painful, to be accepted wholly (by means of pouring new wine into old bottles, with a result which is often barren or disastrous). There are many taking part in education today deluding themselves and other that they understand and accept the theory of the unconscious: in reality all they do is to choose what may be termed the tit bits which gratify their wish for modernism, failing wholly to appreciate the significance of either the part or the whole, and taking great care to repudiate one of the fundamental findings of psychoanalysis - the theory of infantile sexuality. (Low) (30).

The way that academic and education institutions make this compromise has had important consequences for the ensuing conceptualisation of the place of sexual difference in culture and ideology. It has tended to marginalise the significance of gender issues in determining the social formation. For example, the Althusserian concept of reproduction gives a minor significance to the part played by physical reproduction, procreation, in this process, and thus tends to marginalise the importance of the family, seeing it primarily as an ISA, reproducing ideas and ideology more crucially than reproducing people. The dimension of female reality which is based on the caring for and nurturing of children and the family is excluded from the Althusserian concept of reproduction.

However a theory of ideology is crucial to a history of the social organisation of sexual difference, as it can account for the mechanisms of ideological reproduction. But, if it is to be useful in this regard, Althusser's

theory must be correlated with Freudian metapsychology. To do this, it must be acknowledged that, according to Freud, the unconscious has a history, akin to the history of the Oedipus complex. Following this acknowledgement, a new alignment of the theory of ideology and the history of sexual difference will be possible. One of the problematics opened up by Althusser's theory of ideology has been the relationship of history to narrative structure. A classical structuralist view, such as Levi-Strauss' (1960), is not concerned with the temporal dimension of history so much as its repetitive and recurring structures. The Marxist focus on social transformation precludes the synchronism of classical structuralism and requires some dialectical relation between stasis and transformation and some explanation of historical progress. However the structuralist discovery of the elementary structures of discourse has been used to illuminate the material of ideology so that many cultural processes can be analysed as "texts".

A major question then arises as to how to interrelate the history of the subject, of the text and the history of class contradiction as separate but related histories. One of the most useful levels of textual analysis provided by structuralism is that of narrative structure. Narrative structure as defined by Propp consists of a number of motifs with endless permutations of connection between syntagmatic elements and of substitution of characters or paradigmatic functions. All structural analyses of narrative attribute the characteristic "sense of an ending"

of narrative closure to the resolution of structure within the text. It is useful to compare the structural analyses with the psychoanalyses of narrative.

Propp's early formalist analysis of plot structures of Russian fairy tales became the basis of an extended use of the concept of narrative as an 'abstract substratum' or grammar or language of textual meaning. Propp divided the existing analytical unit of 'motif' into a set of paradigms combining roles and functions or character and actions. Certain actions proved common to all plots, such as a predicament of loss followed by acts of restitution. These basic elements might have infinite variation of form such as loss by theft, misplacement, interruption, invasion, banishment, etc. and restitution by conquest, love and marriage, receipt of gifts, vindication, rightful succession to power, or just 'living happily ever after'. Propp's formulation was of obvious interest and value to subsequent structuralism and both Jakobson and Levi-Strauss followed Propp's initiative in their respective fields. For Levi-Strauss, narrative was a form of mythic thought, the logical operation through which non-scientific thought tries to encode the three-dimensional contradictions of reality into the binary logic of symbolic classification and language. Beneath the convoluted storylines and intricate patterns of each myth, Levi-Strauss identified the central contradictions of mythic thought, revealing the significance of particular natural and social environments within the societies studied. He mostly worked with non-literate societies, whose dependence on an oral tradition

would give myth the status of history: and often in non-literate culture genealogical information is interwoven with more general origin myths. All myths are to some extent origin myths, as they seek to explain the fact of a difference between natural and social orders of life, which is the birth of humanity itself. Levi-Strauss also suggested that, in literate societies such as our own, politics serves a similar mythic function to that served by story-telling in non-literate societies.

As a set of paradigmatic elements potentially combined into syntagmatic sequences of infinite variety, narrative structure would seem to confirm that autonomy of symbolic determinism. Levi-Strauss analysed the Oedipus Rex legend and found it to contain an attempted solution to the question of personal origins:

The myth has to do with the inability for a culture which holds the belief that mankind is autochthonous, to find a satisfactory transition between this theory and the knowledge that human beings are actually born from the union of man and woman. Although the problem obviously cannot be solved, the Oedipus myth provides a kind of logical tool which relates the original problem - born from one or born from two? - to the derivative problem: born from different or born from the same? By a correlation of this type, the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations, as the attempt to escape autochthony is to the impossibility to succeed in it. Although experience contradicts theory, social life validates cosmology by its similarity of structure. Hence cosmology is true. (31).

By reducing a story about the passage of time to an atemporal and static contradiction, the 'natural' flow of time is seen as secondary to the meaning it is given by cosmology, society, or the theory. But the central enigma of the Oedipus story, the sphinx's riddle, is of how humans

grow up and age. What is the strange relationship of infancy, maturity and old age in human beings, that the sphinx likens to the natural course of the movement of the sun, a natural arc? The riddle of the human animal is the fact that the course of human aging is 'monstrously' unnatural when compared to other animals. With sexuality in immaturity and infantilism in adulthood, human sexuality is not the mark of maturity as in other animals, but carries with it the meanings of infantile experience.

The temporal axis is rarely seen as significant when binary logic is in operation since it is the logic of the imaginary, which does not recognise the reality of time. Leach has documented a number of rituals concerned with aging and initiation and argues that the social representation of time has a strong determining effect on the real experience of time; if a ritual symbolically reverses time, it may be experienced as time 'going backwards'. Like Levi-Strauss' analysis, this is a strong form of symbolic determinism.

Subsequent narrative analysis has mainly been developed in literary theory and film theory. Todorov replaced the notion of narrative as an infinite repetition of static paradigms with the concept of a textual progression, in which a state of equilibrium (a predicament for characters and for the reader) is disturbed, and mechanisms of delay, obstruction and partial restitution or help are set in motion creating suspense, until a second version of the initial state is created. Barthes' analysis brought the theoretical focus onto the relation of reading subject and

textual structure, the relation of identification between reader and text. The movement in the text from equilibrium-loss-new equilibrium is mirrored in the subject by the experience of plenitude-loss-satisfaction. The pleasure of reading is characterised as the safety of re-experiencing, at a distance, the painful or traumatic experiences of the real. The degree of control that a reader has, literally at his or her fingertips, is an inversion of the helplessness and lack of control experienced in reality endured passively or 'suffered'. An interesting difference was drawn between 'pleasure' and 'jouissance' as forms of textual pleasure, the safety or satisfaction of recognition and the more dangerous experience of loss, "beyond" control of vertiginous displacement, and these pleasures were ascribed to the conventions of classic realism and modernism respectively (Barthes, 1976). The Tel Quel group of critics, particularly Kristeva, extended narrative analysis into social criticism. Narrativity was aligned with the dominance of the Law, monotheistic and monological ideology. The belief in God was seen as a structural equivalent to the faith in univocal meaning in language, the Logos, and the binding of the reader in realist narrative texts, history too, as a univocal narrative (as 'histoire' rather than 'discours') was as illusory as other aspects of the Symbolic cultural axis.

We have seen that Levi-Strauss classifies the Oedipus story as one of a number of myths, rather than as paradigmatic in itself; Barthes, however, concludes his

'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' on a more speculative note:

Although we know scarcely more about the origins of narrative than we do about the origins of language, it can be reasonably suggested that narrative is contemporaneous with monologue, a creation seemingly posterior to that of dialogue. At all events, without wanting to strain the phylogenetic hypothesis, it may be significant that it is at the same moment (around the age of three) that the little human 'invents' at once sentence, narrative and the Oedipus. (32).

Barthes went on to combine psychoanalytic and structuralist concepts in his narrative analysis of literature and cultural artefacts. The deconstructionist school of textual analysis also applies analytic concepts to literary texts in a variety of ways, locating linguistic structures in the subject and psychic structures in the text. A more substantial challenge to the view of narrative as textual structure can be found in Bettelheim's The Uses of Enchantment. (33). Bettelheim interprets a number of European fairy tales as they have been modified over several centuries, comparing original with popularised versions. The tales are grouped into thematic sets according to the types of relations they describe: such as brother-sister, the group of brothers, mother-daughter rivalry, father-son loss: and each tale is discussed in terms of the unconscious fantasies and fears it articulates and contains. Bettelheim suggests that meaning in narrative is derived from the connections it draws between two psychic predicaments. (Propp and Todorov demonstrated that every narrative includes a transition from from a first state of equilibrium to a second one which recapitulates the first and its loss). Bettelheim suggests

that this pattern is itself a representation of the particular structure of human psychic maturation. The early efflorescence of sexuality is expressed in the Oedipus complex, and the everyday tragedy of childhood is the realisation of the impossibility of the satisfaction of these desires, the "tragic and beneficial situation of castration" (Althusser, 1971, p.214). This is the start of the acceptance and symbolisation of the difference between the generations and of the difference between the sexes. This is followed by latency and puberty, where the Oedipal desires are repressed, along with the sharp disappointment and a sense of personal failure (trauma) in the impossible predicament. At puberty, physical sexual maturation reactivates the repressed, unconscious, infantile predicament which is always, to some extent, present in adult sexual, social and cultural relationships, in the form of unconscious phantasy.

For Bettelheim these two phases of the human mental and physical growth are the psychic correlates of the 'Once upon a time' and the 'happily ever after' of fairy tale narrative. The feelings of the castration complex are expressed as loss, injury, lack, theft, violent separation, interruption, etc. and the impossible tasks facing the protagonists in almost all fairy tales represent what it feels like, to the child, to have to wait until maturity to be able to satisfy his or her desires. Feelings of catastrophic loss, or despair, futility and hopelessness are common to all children and the narrative of the fairy tale gives expression to the unspeakable distress of the

loss of infantile omnipotence, and gives hope that desires will eventually find fulfilment. Often the monsters, such as ogres, giants, witches and their human counterparts in neglectful kings, impoverished parents, wicked stepmothers, jealous sisters, etc. represent the aggressive impulses of the child as projected onto the people of his or her environment or onto internal objects of fantasy.

Aggressive fantasies may be autonomous or may be stimulated by the frustration of Oedipal desires; and the physical powerlessness of the child transforms rage into despair. According to Bettelheim, when told or read to children, fairy tales console and reassure the child, so the child is not alone with its imagination, and suggest that impossible tasks can be accomplished with help, so that the future is worth hoping for. Adults find meaning and enjoyment in these stories for the same reason, with the difference that for the adult it is the pleasure of the recognition of an inner world. For children the stories are a necessity not recreation, and they are often told or recounted before children go to sleep when the transition between waking consciousness and sleep or dreamlike duplicates the loss of identity or control inherent in the trauma of the castration complex.

As we have noted, children do not distinguish between Imaginary and Real so that whereas for adults narrative is pleasurable, as it gives recognition to unconscious fantasy within a structure of safety through distance (is pleasurable as fiction), for children the narrative is a fact, a predicament that is actual and not just symbolic.

Adult narrative, in biography, autobiography, history, religion, theory, literature, film, news or gossip, activates the Imaginary within the subject whilst containing it within the overall symbolic structure of the narrative form. It repeats the imaginary loss of a symbolic object.

Structural analysis has recognised narrative as a fundamental human need, as part of the need for meaning or order. Levi-Strauss includes many social structures as examples of myth, or narrative, which would extend its influence from being, in Marxist terms, a superstructural form to effecting the economic base.

So a conceptual contradiction exists here; narrative structure can be understood as an autonomous material structure, akin to language and analogous to the sentence, or it can be seen as a surface structure. If it is part of the codes of langue, then the Oedipus story is but one example among an infinite number of stories, and socio-textual systems must form the basic object of study of cultural analysis. Psychoanalysis would be, as a method, a biographical adjunct of social science. But what if narrative structure is one of the many cultural expressions of a 'universal' Oedipus complex?

(In the following chapter more evidence is given in support of a psychoanalytic interpretation of narrative structure. The concept of superego is understood as directly connected with the 'sense of an ending' characteristic of narrative closure according to Isakower.)

Here, the central concern is with the integration of the theories of the cultural meaning of gender to provide a framework for an adequate recognition of the structural place of sexual difference in society.

Mitchell's Psychoanalysis and Feminism (1974) pioneered the integration of structural, Marxist and psychoanalytic theories to provide a comprehensive analysis of the social position of women. Mitchell's pathway through the Althusserian problematic created a new conception of the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism; one which placed the contradictions of the Oedipus complex more centrally in the dialectics of historical change. Mitchell makes extensive use of Levi-Strauss and Lacan to argue that sociological or economic theories of the political oppression of women do not fully analyse the primary contradiction between capitalism and patriarchy. A psychoanalytically informed analysis of the ideology of patriarchy demonstrates that the "overthrow" of exploitative relationships within the family and in the workplace is possible, given "revolutionary optimism". The longevity of patriarchal ideology, a vestigial remain from a pre-industrial economy, is seen as being the result of unconscious phantasies. Women are represented as not-men, or inferior, as debased, or in terms of a range of negative stereotypes within patriarchal ideology, because of the unconscious phantasy of the mother as a castrated or castrating "other". On the level of the social structure, patriarchy is identified with kinship systems and what Levi-Strauss describes as the "exchange" of women.

Mitchell follows Levi-Strauss fairly closely as she maintains that the Oedipus complex is a subjective correlative of the more primary social structure of the incest taboo. Using Levi-Strauss' insight that the biological triad of procreation is less socially important than the four-part elementary structure of kinship, and that this remains true on an ideological level in capitalist society, Mitchell argues that the biology of sexual difference is not a primarily determining factor in the psychological and political status of men and women:

In no human society do these (the reproductive roles of men and women) take precedence in an untransformed way. The establishment of human society relegates them to a secondary place; though their ideological importation may make them appear dominant ... it is thus not on account of their 'natural' procreative possibilities but on account of their cultural utilisation as exchange objects (which involves an exploitation of their role as propagators) that women acquire their feminine definition and status. (34).

Neither Levi-Strauss nor Mitchell can account for why it is men that "exchange" women rather than women who "exchange" men. An economic or rationalist argument, like Engels' explanation in The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State, stresses the significance of accumulated wealth, inheritance and the subsequent need for the control over legitimate inheritance through certain paternity. There may be something in this explanation, but a more far-reaching explanation can be found in the psychological ambiguity of men's need for women. The Oedipal wishes, remaining in unconscious fantasy, in adults are reactivated especially during mating, pairing or marriage, which creates anxiety about the exact nature of

the purpose of the pairing bond. If men "need" women to provide them with offspring, this logical and biological need is compounded with a vaguer and less specific need which might be called "love". The ambiguity of need, of whether the need for women has a specific object, obviously refers back to the helpless dependence of infancy and childhood, and to the fact that many of the emotions and ideas reactivated in adults are not conscious.

This would explain why ideologies of male dominance and figures of masculine authority exist in societies where inheritance is not patrilineal, and in communities where the inheritance of property is not a factor of economic significance. In other words, the need to institutionalise the control of women, such as in prescriptive kinship systems, is a manifestation of unconscious (irrational and powerfully felt emotions), psychic reality, particularly the Oedipus complex and the pre-Oedipal relation to the mother.

This explanation pushes the psychoanalytic interpretation of culture further than Mitchell's analysis would allow. Mitchell takes on psychoanalysis only if it can be "freed" from its integral historical paradigm:

It seems to me that, 'Why did it happen', and 'historically when' are both false questions. The questions that should be asked in the place of these are: 'how does it happen and when does it take place in our society?'

Most feminisms have tried to show the extent to which feminine identity and the female psyche is determined by social structure and external reality. Mitchell's, more dialectical, analysis nevertheless suggests that an

overthrow of patriarchy is possible through revolutionary optimism. Mitchell's opposition of 'social' and 'biological' categories is part of the intellectual legacy of structural anthropology with its emphasis on binary oppositions. Psychoanalytic theory, in its uncompromised form, precludes any such absolute differentiation between social and biological forms, as it analyses the interaction of body and mind.

Freud's challenge to the intellectualist doctrines of the nineteenth century psychologists had an interesting parallel, in the materialism of Marx and Engels. Engels extended the Marxist materialist analysis of society to the question of origins, in the aforementioned paper, On the part played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man (1876). The evolutionary paradigm of the late nineteenth century invited his speculation on evolutionary process, and Engels reasoned from this theoretical principle that the human brain evolved because of a specific interaction of historical and environmental factors. Engels argues that the historical sequence of walking upright, tool-using labour, language and brain size, as it was being asserted by the idealist doctrine of cerebral primacy was a false one.

All merit for the swift advance of civilisation was ascribed to the mind, to the development and activity of the brain. Men became accustomed to explain their actions from their thoughts, instead of from their needs. And so there arose in the course of time that idealistic outlook which ... has dominated men's minds. It still rules them to such an extent that even the most materialistic natural scientists of the Darwinian school are still unable to form any clear idea of the origin of man, because under that ideological influence they do not recognise the part that has been played

therein by labour. (39).

The idealist doctrine of cerebral primacy re-emerges in Cartesian linguistics and in many aspects of structural anthropology, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter. The Marxist critique of idealism focuses on labour, the Freudian critique is from the perspective of psychological and emotional needs.

The meaning of woman in the unconscious

What are the human needs that determine the social meaning of woman, and of sexual difference? Certainly, as socialist feminism has demonstrated, the institutional and economic systems deriving from the division of labour along gender lines and class lines constitute an important factor in shaping those needs. Similarly, the symbolic and sexual needs identified by Levi-Strauss in kinship systems and all ideologies prescribing sexual or marital relations are another determining factor. But unless the reality of human infancy is fully understood, the significance of unconscious factors in human needs will continue to pass unrecognised.

Of the many accounts of unconscious processes, the feminist appropriation of psychoanalysis has focused primarily on the debates around the Freudian and Lacanian theories of "phallic monism". Mitchell (1974) Mulvey (1975), Brown and Adams (1979), Cixous (1976), Irigaray (1977) and Gallop (1982) have taken to the Freudian and Lacanian theories of the castration complex to analyse the ideological misrepresentations of women. A careful account of Freud's theory of the development of male and female sexualities is given in Mitchell (1974) and only the debate specific to the conflict indicated in the opening quotes of this chapter will be discussed here.

Briefly stated, the conflict between differing theories of the status of sexual difference, can be exemplified in the accounts given by Lacan and Winnicott. Lacan understands femininity and masculinity to be defined by the

relation of the subject to the signifier, and the primary unconscious signifier of the phallus. Winnicott has suggested that women and men are defined, as gendered subjects, by their relation to "Woman", the unconscious meaning of the mother.

In order that the significance of the difference between these views be fully grasped, some initial elaboration of the underlying concepts is necessary. A full account of Freudian theory on this theme is given in Mitchell (1974) and will not be repeated here. But the Freudian theory, briefly put, is that the psychic development of men and women follows an identical path until the emergence of the Oedipus complex. Until that time, neither boys nor girls have any realistic idea of the difference between the sexes. In the phallic phase all children assume that everybody has a penis, boys because their narcissism protects them from acknowledging difference, and girls assuming that their own genital organs are an as yet undeveloped form of the adult male version. Freud's own research was largely based on observations of early male sexuality, and he was extremely modest about the success of this as a means of understanding female sexuality. Nevertheless many of the technical and metapsychological concepts in Freud's work were based on knowledge of male subjectivity. The first introduction of the concept of Oedipus complex in 1910 in 'On a Certain Type of Object Choice Made by Men' and the first use of the concept of the castration complex in 'On the Sexual Theories of Children' in 1908, are both in

papers that are centrally about male sexuality. Often Freud's papers do contain a conceptual slippage between 'boy' and 'child'. Not until the late 1920s and early 1930s did Freud focus specifically on the construction of femininity and female sexuality, eventually suggesting that the whole area of research should be handed over to women themselves, and concluding somewhat pessimistically that psychoanalysis had "contributed nothing" to understanding women.

The early papers on sexuality and identity assumed a natural heterosexuality in girls and women, in order to comply with the Oedipus concept and not until 1925 in Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Difference Between the Sexes was there a complete reassessment of the theory of female sexuality which stressed the girl's primary emotional attachment to the mother. In 1924 in The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex Freud posited the complex as the central dynamic of infantile sexuality, seeing it as the dominant fantasy until its inherent impossibility, or some external event such as the birth of a sibling, shatters the Oedipus complex and inaugurates the castration complex. In the boy the castration complex results in the child giving up the father as a rival and identifying with him instead. The violence of the passion in the relation to the father is repressed and is replaced by 'affectionate ties'. During latency, sublimation works on the sexual drives, replacing the initial objects with aim-inhibited objects. For example, Klein has suggested that sexual curiosity in looking, scopophilia, is

transformed into epistemophilia, the desire to know. (This would certainly account for the ubiquity of cultural references to knowledge expressed in visual metaphors, such as: the 'enlightenment', 'perspective', 'aspect', to 'see' sense, to 'see' the point, to 'see' reason, to 'look into' a problem, to 'cast light' on, etc.) During latency, school learning takes the place of the more physical and imaginative play of early childhood. According to Freud the 'heir to the castration complex' is the superego. The child's aggression, either conceived as an innate and constitutional disposition or as a response to the frustration of powerlessness, is projected onto the father, who is seen as the source of frustration, and is then reintrojected in the form of an 'internal' paternal prohibition. Identification with the father who is envied as the mother's partner and with the father's own superego or sense of judgement are important aspects of the superego. But the instinctual energy of this psychic agency comes directly from the id, and is influenced by the ego only insofar as it is used defensively, as a protection against loss of self-esteem. Grunberger has suggested that prohibition is 'invented' by the child rather than internalised from taboo or law embodied in the father, thus 'I cannot do such and such' becomes 'I must not do such and such', which is a much more satisfactory arrangement from the child's point of view.

Freud assumed that infantile sexuality, at the time of the Oedipus and castration complexes was primarily phallic, and that because of this the child's "sexual theories", or

search for knowledge, are abandoned inconclusively at a time when the meaning of sex and knowledge is experienced as predominantly phallic. Through latency until puberty there is no knowledge of the reality of the female genitals as complementary to phallic sexuality, nor of female sexuality. Thus in the unconscious in the phantasies that are the repressed 'sexual theories' of children there exists only the concept of the male genital. The encounter with reality is simultaneously an encounter with the difference between 'internal' and 'external' reality, and a sexual encounter with 'woman' as representing the truth of the other. Whilst Freud analysed mechanisms of fetishism and splitting as forms of disavowal of visual knowledge of sexual difference, which would indicate some acknowledgement of that difference, he considered that this did not constitute a knowledge of the female genital. It was simply, for the child, a perception of an absence of the male genital, and hence a confirmation of the possibility of castration.

As we have noted, before 1925 Freud thought that the little girl developed according to the same pattern as the boy and that she too assumed that all adults have the male genital. Because girls were seen to lack any potential organ for castration it was thought that their castration complex was less resolved than that of the boy and their superego less developed. Girls were thought to simply take the mother's place through identification without introjecting a prohibitive paternal object. Later this idea was amended and it was suggested that whereas boys

move from the Oedipal to the castration complexes, for the girl the transition was the other way around, with the castration complex being initiated by the realisation that she is lacking and result in a turning towards the father in the hope that he will supply with something to make good the lack, the female Oedipus complex. So the motivating force of change in the girl is 'penis envy' with the girl wanting the penis in any number of forms of displacement. Freud considered that the girl too had no knowledge of her vagina and internal sexual organs as complements of the penis until the discovery of sexuality at puberty. This is the theory of phallic monism, briefly put, the hypothesis, confirmed by certain clinical data, that there is no unconscious representation or knowledge of a female equivalent to the phallus, because there is no infantile experience or knowledge of the vagina. Lacan's version of the theory of phallic monism combines the Freudian theory with a Levi-Straussian understanding of the centrality of the signifier, the symbolic and language in the construction of the subject. Following Saussure's concept of the signifier as conveying meaning only through arbitrary and conventional relation to the signified, and through the encoding of patterns of difference from other signifiers, Lacan proposes that the phallus is a signifier. That is, the phallus is to be considered as neither anatomical organ, nor fantasy of a part-object, but as a representation that is simultaneously psychic and social. For Lacan the phallus is the signifier of desire, as it is the place of the Symbolic that intervenes with the paternal

prohibition on Oedipal demands. Sexual difference is inscribed in language, and the Symbolic, only in relation to the phallus, the other sex is other because it does not have the phallus.

Woman is thus a minus and not a whole, the woman does not make the unified One: she is the 'not-one' (pas une) of the phallic structure of language. (36)

Since language mediates the real, the symbolic negativity of woman influences the perception of reality, and Lacan proposes that this be signified, in his theory, by the barring of the definite article, femme "woman", indicating that woman exists only in negation. Unlike Freud's, Lacan's theory is not a developmental psychology, and gives only descriptions of different topologies of the subject. Insofar as childhood is significant for the Lacanian subject, it is as the site of a series of psychic separations marked by the signifier of difference. Initially visual, in the Imaginary realm of the mirror phase, the signifier marks the loss of a fantasised unity of infant with mother. As speech is learned, the verbal signifier of word, sound or phoneme, comes to mediate needs, and to phrase demands, but it is above all at the castration complex that the signifier with its realm of the Symbolic order comes to play its full role in the construction of the subject. With the Imaginary, and the Real, the Symbolic is one 'axis' of subjectivity. The Symbolic, as a concept, is partly taken from the Freudian concept of the superego and partly from Levi-Strauss' theory of culture as determined by exchange relations (Levi-Strauss: "Any culture can be looked upon as an

ensemble of symbolic systems, in the front of which are to be found language, marriage laws, economic relations, art, science and religion."). The phallus, then, is the signifier of a system of exchange and intersubjective reciprocity. The subject has to renounce one function of his organ ("castration is the symbolic lack of an imaginary object"), thereby confirming the precedence of culture over nature.

As well as being based on an assumption about the primacy of symbolic systems in the construction of the subject, Lacan's theory is based on the idea that the visual sense is primary after birth. Freud's view differs from this because of the centrality given to the drives rather than to language: for Freud all five senses are contributing to the ego (the ego is a body ego) but sight carries the psychological significance of control and domination, because of phylogenetic transformations in posture. Sight is not necessarily the dominant sense, for Freud, but only the sense of domination. This Lacanian assumption of the dominance of the visual is the cornerstone of his theory of why it is the phallus that functions as signifier of difference.

In relation to the boy, the Oedipal girl indeed has 'nothing' to offset against her lack vis-a-vis her mother and father's bodies. It is the difference between the generations, as much as that between the sexes, that is the foundation of reality and the castration complex. The little boy's overvaluation of his external organ in comparison to a sister's 'lack' is a defensive reaction to

the sense of inadequacy in relation to the parents, adult sexuality and generativity. But for Lacan the adult subject remain, in large part, a 'boy' so that woman's phallic negativity, her lack of being, her unspokenness and negative relation to language results in an impossibility of knowing female desire. Whilst lacking in desire, woman is claimed to have a supplementary relation to enjoyment - the unspoken aspect of desire.

If she is excluded from the nature of things, which is the nature of words, it is just because she is not-all (pas toute), she has, in relation to what the phallic function designates as enjoyment, a supplementary enjoyment. (37).

Lacan has linked this to the symbolic nature of female orgasm, which represents sexuality unbound from its 'natural' function of procreation, and which is purely gratuitous. But since the mark of the feminine remains unspeakable, in excess of language, culture, exchange, control, the pleasure principle and thus outside of the ego, woman, as a being, has no representation. This is thought to be true for women as well as true for the male subject's view of woman. 'Woman' is other to herself insofar as she is a sexed being.

Lacanian feminists have seen this as an explanation of the way in which certain cultural forms of denigration of women seem to be universal. By representing a threat to male narcissism, as the representation of castration, women are subjected to symbolic forms of control, punishment and humiliation. They are hated because they are feared, and they are feared because an encounter with the real entails a loss of imaginary omnipotence. The patriarchal

unconscious is like the mood of the post-Oedipal boy, wanting control, absence of pain, frustration, wanting to rid himself of suffering in order to return to the illusion of omnipotence; the boy wants revenge. Mulvey describes the Lacanian theory of phallic monism as "a theory that brilliantly describes the power relationships of patriarchy" (Mulvey, 1975).

On the other hand, Irigaray sees the theory of phallic monism as the epitome of misogyny, as an assertion that the boy child's omnipotence must be maintained by cultural and psychological systems, and she sets up an alternative gynocentric theory of language based on the morphology of the vulva and the female capacity for reception and procreation. Which is correct? Is the Lacanian theory an explanation of phallocentrism or is it a phallocentric theory?

During the 1930s a number of women analysts took Freud at his word and set out to build a theory of female sexuality. Of particular interest are those of Horney, Klein and Jones, who amended and replaced the theory of phallic monism with theories of innate knowledge of primary femininity. Horney's theories are known as 'culturalist', in that she allocates a determining role to the cultural environment in establishing the reality of psychic life. She also hypothesised, following years of clinical practice, the existence of an early knowledge of the existence of the vagina in girls. She considered that the strength of aggressive impulses in childhood gave rise to fantasies of the danger of the vagina, or the fear of being

penetrated, and that the girl's phallic phase and penis envy was a secondary, reactive formation, a defence. The knowledge of the vagina, from internal sensations and unconscious fantasy, is specific to female subjectivity and forms the basis of the specifically female castration complex, the fear of penetration, or being invaded, or the fear of deprivation of sexuality as a woman.

Similarly Klein and some of her co-workers posited an intuitive or innate knowledge of the vagina and uterus as components of a fantasised 'inside' of the mother's body, connected by children of both sexes to some idea of where babies come from. Klein posits the existence of a very early and complicated psychic life, with the Oedipus complex operating as early as the first months of life. The Freudian concept of developmental stages is underwritten, in Kleinianism, by a theory of a potential oscillation between two psychic 'positions', the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive. Earliest defenses, before the psyche is capable of repression, are those of projection and splitting, and these mechanisms remain active in the adult as a 'paranoid-schizoid' core reactivated in dreams, under duress and in mental illness. Post-Oedipal infancy brings with it the capacity for integration, reparation, and some awareness of aggression and thus some responsibility for it, which is the depressive position. Klein posited many psychic contents as innate, with a primitive ego operating from birth and innate or constitution envy. However, Riviere notes that the structure of envy is not symmetrical in the sexes.

Men's envy of women is not less common than women's of men, nor less profound. But it is much less recognised and understood; and I think this is due, not simply to the prejudice of men on this delicate point but to the nature of things. As far as a little boy's envy of his mother's breasts and milk is concerned, he has himself a special organ to set off against them, a penis. Now his little sisters have not got either penis or breasts; so that his satisfaction and superiority about having a penis can be used to conceal and counterbalance his wish for a body that could make and feed babies. All their lives men continue to make use of this compensation against their envy of women, and one important element in the enormous psychological significance of the penis is to be found in this compensation. The chief reason why men's envy of women remains so hidden is because it relates precisely to the inside of women's bodies, to the mysterious functions and processes that go on, magically, as it seems, inside women (their mothers) making babies and milk. It appears too that, just as women envy men's initiative, conversely men envy women's capacity for passive experience, especially the capacity to bear and to suffer. Suffering relieves guilt; especially is the pain that brings life into the world doubly enviable, unconsciously, to men. Men cannot easily become conscious of what they envy, because they do not really altogether know what it is. ... Their speculations and imaginings about the experiences of women are of course part of their phantasy life, which they keep very much apart from their conscious everyday life, there they naturally prefer only to show their masculine side, since that they both know about and can use. (It would seem that, prejudice apart, we have to employ a special technique for exploring the unconscious mind before we can obtain access to the sources and understanding of that strong envy in men and women, which lies hidden in the life of imagination and phantasy. (38)).

If this theory is correct, it would also account for some of the reasons why it is that the visual senses is overvalued in many cultural forms, including art and science. We have noted that vision is used as a metaphor for knowledge throughout philosophy and theory, and as a metaphor it carries the unconscious meaning of the infantile desire to see inside, to possess and control the 'inside' of the mother's body. Riviere notes that men's envy of women remain hidden because its object is also

hidden and unknown: and the more it is hidden from consciousness, repressed, the more it emerges in a projected metaphorical form in the 'outside' world of culture.

The Kleinian view also influenced Ernest Jones' theory of female sexual development, and like Mrs Klein he supposed a feminine development that is different from the boy's, based on bodily differences reflected in psychic structures and based on the importance of the mother as the first love object of both sexes. His theory of innate knowledge of femininity in the pre-Oedipal girl children led Jones to posit a specifically female form of castration anxiety, 'aphanisis', or the dread of the loss of sexuality per se, as a female equivalent of the boy's castration anxiety. (39).

Each of these three post-Freudian accounts of female sexuality argue that the concept of phallic monism is insufficient to account for the structure of femininity and the meaning of femininity for both sexes.

Lacanian feminism argues that, since subjectivity and gender are effects of symbolic structure and language, both gender identities are potentially available to either sex. There is no biological or psychological reason why a female body necessitates a female identity nor a male body a masculine one; the relation of body to psyche is as arbitrary and conventional as that of signified to signifier.

A more far-reaching account of the influence and meaning of sexual difference is developed in the object

relations school of post-Freudian psychoanalysis. This focuses on the two-person relationship between infant and mother that precedes the triangulation of Oedipal structure. Klein's theory is one part of the object relations school, and was of influence on Winnicott, whose account of the psychological significance of the primacy of maternal care, on men and women alike, is of obvious value to feminist attempts at understanding the asymmetrical relation between the sexes. Instead of comparing the parallel development of masculine and feminine psychological and sexual development, as does classical Freudian theory, or of comparing the male and female relation to the signifier and the symbolic, as does Lacanian theory, Winnicott emphasises the fact of 'absolute dependence' on maternal care and the fear that this produces.

There is no getting round the fact that each man and woman came out of a woman. The more this is examined the more it becomes necessary to have a term WOMAN that makes possible a comparison of men and women.

We find that the trouble is not so much that everyone was inside and then born, but that at the very beginning everyone was dependent on a woman. It is necessary to say that at first everyone was absolutely dependent on a woman, and then relatively dependent.

Now it is very difficult indeed for a man or woman to reach to a true acceptance of this fact of absolute and then relative dependence insofar as it applies to the actual man or woman. For this reason there is a separated out phenomenon that we call WOMAN which dominates the whole scene and affects all our arguments. WOMAN is the unacknowledged mother of the first stages of the life of every man and woman. (40).

Winnicott's clear and straightforward prose made his work widely accessible to the women he addressed as 'the ordinary devoted mother' in radio broadcasts and in

published lectures. The relation between theory and practice was carefully considered and Winnicott was careful not to undermine the confidence of the ordinary mother's trust in her intuition. Whilst turning his scientific and medical knowledge to understand the psychological and social significance of the extended dependence of infancy, he never allowed the authority of science to dominate or 'take over' from the ordinary mother. It was used to support, to recognise, and, where necessary, to help the mother, infant and family and their interdependence. This recognition of the mother is of great importance, but is very difficult to achieve:

The mother at the beginning, by an almost 100% perfect adaptation, affords the infant the opportunity for the illusion that her breast is part of the infant. It is, as it were, under magical control. The same can be said of infant care in general, in the quiet times between excitements. Omnipotence is nearly a fact of experience. The mother's eventual task is gradually to disillusion the infant, but she has no hope of success unless at first she has been able to give sufficient opportunity for illusion. Indeed a recognition of absolute dependence on the mother and her capacity for primary material preoccupation, or whatever it is called, is something which belongs to extreme sophistication, and to a stage not always reached by adults. The general failure of recognition of absolute dependence at the start contributes to the fear of WOMAN that is the lot of both men and women. (41)

The theme of recognition of the mother was also a central concern in the work of Irigaray and Kristeva in French feminism, and in the work of Dinnerstein, Chodorow and Friday in the United States. The British tradition has tended to remain on the level of empirical and sociological documentation. Critical of logic, Irigarayan poetry frequently attacks the metalanguage of theory and science as patriarchal theft of the truth of experience. The

recognition that psychological science and practice has often attempted to rival 'the mother' as nurturer, creator, and in the function of understanding, may have led to the defensive cult of the idealisation of motherhood. Some elements of this exist in Kleinian theory and practice, where the mother is sometimes seen from the point of view of the infant, as magical and omnipotent, rather than from a real perspective. The difficulty of a real recognition of the significance of the mother is due, as Winnicott has noted, to the fact that this level of experience is deeply repressed, and our feelings about it are very strong and very irrational. Mystification of the mother, whether by men or women, is another defence against recognition. Winnicott suggests some more consequences of lack of recognition:

... is not the contribution of the devoted mother unrecognised precisely because it is immense? If this contribution is accepted, it follows that every man and woman who is sane, every man or woman who has the feeling of being a person in the world, and for whom the world means something, every happy person, is in infinite debt to a woman.

Once again, let me emphasize, the result of such recognition when it comes will not be gratitude or even praise. The result will be a lessening in ourselves of a fear. If our society delays making full acknowledgement of this dependence, which is a historical fact in the initial stage of development of every individual, there must remain a block both to progress and to regression, a block that is based on fear. If there is no true recognition of the mother's part then there must remain a vague fear of dependence. This fear will sometimes take the form of a fear of WOMAN, or a fear of a woman, and at other times will take less easily recognised forms, always including the fear of domination. (42).

Fear of domination leads to being dominated, paradoxically, and this dynamic is obviously present in the popular appeal of a prime minister like Mrs Thatcher. Mrs

Thatcher, despite being a woman successfully competing in a male world, is not a feminist phenomenon, because far from working towards a recognition of the social debt to WOMAN, her power is based on the exploitation of the fear produced by the denial of dependence. The fear of domination leads to the desire for domination, which is expressed in an ideological form in the popularity of Thatcher's public image. The Iron Lady, like the phallic mother, has an appeal which is counter to the true recognition of dependence on WOMAN. It offers the illusory safety of a return to the omnipotence of fusion. Recognition of dependence by society is a necessary precondition of democracy, freedom and creativity for both sexes, and only this recognition can produce the possibility of an equal and mutual collaboration between men and women as adults.

In psychoanalytic theory, the transition from a primarily Oedipal analysis to object relations theory over the past fifty years has provided us with the means of reconceptualising the role of sexual difference in society and culture. Rather than this being understood in terms of the relation between 'male' and 'female' as psychological, symbolic or cultural categories, of complementarity, it is clear that the meaning of sexual difference is fundamentally determined by fear of "the unacknowledged mother of the first stages of life of every man and woman". The Lacanian theory has been very successful, particularly in academic and philosophical contexts, but a theory which sees sexual difference as the product of symbolic systems, and which sees language as a determining instance of the

meaning of sexual difference is taking on only the most superficial aspects of the problem. The effectiveness of a politics of cultural change based on this theory will be limited, transforming conventions of representation and pioneering a form of écriture feminine, can only be part of the larger project to recognise that before language there is the raged-at mother. The rage and fear that is pre-linguistic and pre-Oedipal is responsible for "the immense amount of cruelty to women which can be found in customs that are accepted by almost all civilisations." (43).

The significance of this for feminism is that the social recognition of the debt to WOMAN is a necessary precondition of any long-standing change in the social, legal and economic position of women. Whether social institutions are conceptualised as the phenomenal forms of underlying economic or political systems, or as autonomous as determining forces in themselves, the changes that legislation and resourcing can bring about are ineffectual without the acknowledgement (on a subjective and social level) of the fact of this dependence on WOMAN. This may then facilitate a realistic conceptualisation of women, unimpeded by fantasy, so that women's needs may be realistically taken into account in social and political planning and organisation.

Footnotes to Chapter One

- 1 S. Freud, 'An Outline of Psycho Analysis', (London, Hogarth Press, 1964), S.E. Vol. 23, p.188.
- 2 J. Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism, (London, Penguin, 1974) 2nd edition, pp.407-8.
- 3 J. Kristeva, 'Du sujet en linguistique', Polylogue, (Paris, Seuil, 1977) p.302. This ambiguity is an indication of the contradictions integral to the otherwise exact science of grammar. Kristeva substitutes the Freudian problematic of subjectivity for the ambiguous "intuition" of Chomsky's speaker-hearer, and, following Kristeva's perspective, I contend that a psychoanalytically informed concept of intuition has a valid and useful place in the theory of language and representation, and, extending Kristeva's process of theoretical substitution, argue that intuition is central to feminist science.
- 4 F. Jacob, 'Evolution and Tinkering [Bricolage]', 1977, Science (Vol. 196, No. 4295), p.1166.
- 5 Ibid. p.1162.
- 6 Van Spruiell, 'Kuhn's "Paradigm" and Psychoanalysis', Psycho Analytic Quarterly (1983, LII), pp.353-363.
- 7 J. Jaynes, unpublished thesis, University of London, compares the scientific evaluations of psychoanalytic theory and method, also S. Fisher and R. Greenberg eds. The Scientific Evaluation of Freud's Theories, (London, Harvester, 1978). And B. Farrell, The Standing of Psycho Analysis (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981).
- 8 E. Leach, 'Anthropological Approaches to Language; Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse', New Directions in the Study of Language, ed. E. Lenneberg, (Boston, MIT, 1969).
- 9 G. Devereux, From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioural Sciences, (Paris-The Hague, Mouton, 1967).
- 10 Ibid., p.3.
- 11 and 12 Ibid., p.6.
- 13 S. Heath, 'A Question of Emphasis', (1973), Cinema and Semiotics, (Screen Reader 2, London, SEFT, 1981), p.18.
- 14 J. Kristeva, op. cit., pp.488-489.
- 15 Ibid., p.319.

- 16 J. Kristeva, 'Giotto's Joy', 1972, Desire in Language ed. L. Roudiez, trans. T. Gara and A. Jardine (Oxford, Blackwells, 1980), p.232.
- 17 J. Mitchell, 1982, 'Freud and Lacan: Psycho-Analytic Theories of Sexual Difference', in Feminine Sexuality (London, Macmillan, 1982), reprinted in Women, The Longest Revolution (London, Virago, pp.249-250).
- 18 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' in Marx & Engels', Selected Works, (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1968). Engels' text is discussed from a feminist perspective by R. Delmar 'The Rights and Wrongs of Women' (London, Penguin, 1977).
- 19 'On Historical Materialism', Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy ed. L. Feuer, (London, Fontana, 1972), p.94.
- 20 'Letter to Joseph Bloch, September 21, 1890', Engels, Ibid., p.437.
- 21 "We see that kinship relations in primitive society play the dominant role. How can we understand both the dominant role of kinship within primitive society and the determining role, in the final analysis, of economics; and more generally how do we understand the dominant role of a structure in a particular type of society?" M. Godelier, Marxist Perspectives in Anthropology (1973) trans. R. Brain, (London & Cambridge, CUP Cambridge Studies in Anthropology, No. 18, 1977), p.122. The Althusserian distinction between dominant and determining structures in the social formation is further explored below.
- 22 The concept of code would imply that historical change is reversible and recurring. A diachronic view of history is based on a concept of the irreversibility of time, and temporal change. But Levi-Strauss cites Marx's 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', 1869, in his autobiographical 'Tristes Tropiques' (London, J. Cape, 1973), p.57.
- 23 C. Meillasoux, Femmes, Greniers, Capitaux, Maidens, Meal and Money (London, C.U.P., 1979).
- 24 'Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon', 1968, Lenin and Philosophy, trans. B. Brewster (London, NLB, 1971), p.17.
- 25 'On the Materialist Dialectic', 1965, For Marx (London, NLB, 1969), p.166.
- 26 'Myth Today', Mythologies, 1957, trans. A. Lavers (London, J. Cape, 1972), The concepts of first order and second order signification, of denotation and connotation are used by Barthes to describe the ideological dimension of language. The apparent naturalness of denotation facilitates the subject's

misrecognition.

- 27 'Freud and Lacan', 1964, trans. B. Brewster in Lenin and Philosophy, op. cit., pp.195-219.
- 28 'Ideology and the State', op.cit., p.160.
- 29 'The Politics of Separation', Screen (Vol. 16, No. 4, Winter 1975-6) pp.46-61.
- 30 Barbara Low, 'A note on the influence of Psycho Analysis upon English education during the last eighteen years', International Journal of Psycho Analysis (Vol. 10, 1929), pp.314-320.
- 31 C. Levi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study of Myth', Structural Anthropology (London, Penguin Books, 1972), p.160.
- 32 R. Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives' (1966), Image-Music-Text trans. and ed. S. Heath (New York, Hill and Wang, 1977), p.160.
- 33 B. Bettelheim, 'The Uses of Enchantment', (London, Penguin, 1978).
- 34 Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism, p.365.
- 35 Engels, 1876. The Dialectics of Nature, (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954). Quoted in S. Jay-Gould, Ever Since Darwin, Chapter 7, (London, Penguin, 1977).
- 36 The Works of Jacques Lacan, An Introduction, B. Benvenuto and R. Kennedy (London, Free Association Books, 1986), p.189.
- 37 Lacan, Encore (Paris, Vo. XX in Le Seminaire, Seuil, 1975), p.68.
- 38 J. Riviere 'Hate, Greed and Aggression' in Love, Hate and Reparation. M. Klein and J. Riviere (London, Hogarth Press, 1937), p.
- 39 E. Jones, 'The Early Development of Sexuality' and 'Early Female Sexuality', Papers on Psycho Analysis (London, Balliere Tyndall and Cox, 1950), Chapters XXV and XXVII.
- 40 D.W. Winnicott, 'The Feminism', Home is Where We Start From, (London, Penguin, 1986), p.192.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 'The Mother's Contribution to Society', op.cit., p.125.
- 43 'The Meaning of the Word Democracy', op.cit., p.252.

Social reality and psychic reality

This chapter takes Freud's short book, Totem and Taboo and examines, in detail, its hypotheses on the dialectic of psychic reality and social structure. I also discuss the derivation of the hypotheses from the earlier clinical and cultural studies that Freud conducted. The influences on Totem and Taboo are described to contextualise its usage of biological and anthropological concepts.

The exposition of the central points of Freud's theory is followed by a review of the book's reception by anthropologists. The particularly negative responses of the functionalists and the structuralists are discussed, and the psychoanalytic theory is compared with the anthropological theory of totemism.

The concept of the avunculate is also discussed, particularly as it arose in the debate between Malinowski and Jones over the interpretation of Oedipal structures in pre-literate Papuan-Melanesian society. The question of whether the Oedipal complex is universal, or whether it is a product only of western Europe's nuclear family structure, is asked in relation to historical, cultural and social difference.

Finally, the phylogenetic or evolutionary dimension of Freud's work is explored in relation to contemporary evolution theory. Freud's neo-Lamarckianism is considered as a precursor to the development of the concepts of superego and identification, which account for the inheritance of "acquired characteristics" of culture.

Totemism is thought by anthropologists to be one of the most primitive forms of social organisation and classification. It has two aspects, a social side which assigns clan membership to individuals and a religious side which concerned the relation of the individual or group to its totem species. In totemic societies, the tribe is divided into sub-groups (phratries, sub-phratries, clans) and each group identifies itself with a species, usually an animal, sometimes a plant. The clan calls itself after its totem and individuals have a set of devotional obligations towards the totem animal, particularly centred on prohibitions on killing, except in certain rituals where the totem animal is killed and sacrificially eaten. (1)

Totemism is also connected with exogamy, as clan membership is usually transmitted matrilineally, and each clan is exogamous. Some speculation exists as to whether exogamy is intrinsic to totemism or whether the two systems are separate social forms.

Australia is thought to have the most complete and original form of totemism, but totemic societies also exist among tribes in Melanesia, Polynesia, India, Africa and North America.

Totemism can be firstly conceived as a form of ritual and socio-religious structure, as it is studied by sociology and anthropology. Secondly, it has been conceived as a psychic structure. A structure which comprises the interconnecting themes of incest prohibition, kinship systems, and the symbolic representation of the "father" in the psyche. Speculation on totemism as a

psychic structure was initiated by Frazer, Totemism and Exogamy (1910) but not theorised until 1913 by Freud in Totem and Taboo. This was also Freud's first major essay in psychoanalysis applied to cultural analysis and the earliest statement of his hypothesis that the Oedipus complex is the basis of the relation between human and social structure. The problem of totemism provided a specific form for Freud to work through his theory of psychic determinism and to demonstrate the fact of ambivalence in all human relationships. Totemism also required formulations on the meaning of origin and fantasies of origin for human relationships, and the speculations on the relation between documentation of history and awareness of death. After Freud, Geza-Roheim, Theodor Reik and other psychoanalytic theorists have presented variations on the interpretations of Totem and Taboo and the significance of these variations will be discussed in more detail.

The two sides of totemism are discussed by anthropological and psychoanalytical theories. A number of questions arise from their juxtaposition, "Is paternity a social structure or a biological structure?", "Is the father the prototype of social authority or its replica?", "Is ritual a collective enactment of psychic conflict or is psychic conflict an internal reflection of social discord?", "How are we to differentiate between psychic reality and "external" reality?"

The publication of Totem and Taboo marked Freud's definitive assertion of the primacy of psychic reality.

The earlier work on hysteria entailed the discovery of the unconscious and the self analysis and dream interpretation described more specifically how the unconscious works. The clinical cases of 'Little Hans', the 'Rat Man' and Schreber expanded and consolidated Freud's sense of the autonomy of psychic reality and the unconscious. Totem and Taboo was the result of this sense of an autonomous Oedipus complex. The following chapter explores the conflict between the anthropological and psychoanalytic theories of totemism, through a study of the critical reception of Freud's Totem and Taboo and the ideas associated with totemism.

The third area of questioning opened up by Totem and Taboo is that of the historical dimensions, the question of the co-evolution of human mind with culture and language. Totemism itself recognises an implicit relation between human species and other animal species but, lacking a historical comprehension of this relation, substitutes a metaphoric relation. Of course totemism is a way of using relations between species to symbolise a set of intra-social human relationships, as Levi-Strauss has demonstrated, but in its prehistoric formulation of the question, "What is our father?", it intuitively the Darwinian answer, not God but other species.

The claims made by cultural relativists, that totemism is as valid a system of classification as any system, are clearly exaggerated to the point of idealising primitive classification. Without idealising totemism's "solution" to the problem of finding a comprehension of and notation of origins and descent, it is clear that their thinking is

very much along the same lines as Western science.

The psychoanalytic interpretation of totemism and the associated prohibition and taboos that create laws and social codes provides a comprehensive and substantial account of why this similarity should exist between a pre-literate and a scientific account of origins and classification. But the explanation provided in Totem and Taboo has many shortcomings. Why is it a Lamarckian theory? What is meant by the "phylogenetic inheritance" of certain "memory traces"? Does this theory correspond to any post-Mendelian account of genetic inheritance?

What is the significance of the "real event" in Freud's account of both history and psychic reality? What is the significance of the hypothesis of 'primal parricide' and is it to be sustained? What is provided by a re-reading of Totem and Taboo informed by contemporary evolutionary theory?

Totem and Taboo: Freud's hypothesis

Totem and Taboo was written in four parts: the first three being preliminary to the hypothesis advanced in the fourth. The first essay, 'The Horror of Incest', discusses the ethnographic research into Australian Aboriginal totemic exogamy. Totemism is characteristic of peoples in parts of Polynesia and Melanesia, India, Africa and North America, but totemism has generally been regarded as occurring in Australia in its most complete and original form. Under totemic societies, the tribe is divided into two phratries, four subphratries and twelve totem clans,

represented by a totem (usually an animal). All divisions are exogamous so that an individual is prohibited from having sexual relations with anyone from the same clan. Australian totemism has an equally important economic and social dimension. Among the tribes of central Australia all those important happenings such as the origin of man and his customs, and the recurrence of birth and death are explained in totemic terms, as originally in "olden days" there were only totemic beings: emu, grub, etc. - half animal and half human in form.

The major ethnographic source of information for Totem and Taboo was Sir J.G. Frazer's four volume study, Totem and Exogamy (1910), which provided a mass of data on totemism organised geographically; Freud started reading this in 1910 (Jones, 1955, p. 351) and also read Bachofen's Mutterrecht (1861), McLennan's Primitive Marriage (1865), Tylor's Researches into the Early History of Mankind (1865) and Primitive Culture (1871), Lubbock's Origin of Civilisation (1870) and Morgan's Systems of Consanguinity (1871) and Ancient Society (1877). Two of Durkheim's studies were also central references: 'La Prohibition de l'Inceste et ses origines' (1898) and the more extensive study of totemism in The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1908).

Freud differentiated between nominalist, sociological and psychological theories of the origins of totemism. Sociological and historical explanations like those of Durkheim, Tylor and Morgan assumed that the power of the social group formed the individual. Psychological

explanations such as those of Frazer and Wundt (1911) focussed on the religious dimensions of totemism. For example, Frazer:

The key to totemism might be found in the theory of the external soul, that is, in the belief that living people may deposit their souls for safe keeping outside of themselves in some secure place (totem) where the precious deposit will be less exposed to the vicissitudes of life than while it remained in the body of its owner (1910, Vol. 4, p. 52). (2)

Freud synthesises the ethnological material and identifies the essential characteristics of Australian totemism: the fact that all original totems were animals, that these were regarded as the ancestors of the different clans; that totems were inherited only through the female line; that there was a prohibition against killing the totem, and lastly that there was a prohibition against marriage and sexual relations between members of the totem clan.

A central problem for explanations of totemism was to account for the link between totemism and exogamy. Some held the two systems to be inextricable, others claimed separate origins and history. Where clan membership is matrilineal, the exogamous prohibition served to regulate mother-son, brother-sister, relations. Where patrilineal lineage predominates (Africa), the father-daughter, brother-sister, relations are most strongly tabooed.

Freud assumes that exogamy is a central characteristic of totemism, and speculates on the interaction of the social and psychological aspects of taboo. Starting from the psychoanalytic premise that what is strongly tabooed represents a repressed wish, Freud suggests that the

'horror of incest', socially expressed as a phobia or taboo, is a protection against desires to gratify wishes. In exogamous taboos, the wishes in question are the childhood incestuous wishes that have been repressed and have become subconscious and are felt as immediate dangers which require very severe forms of defensive restraint.

The second essay, 'Taboo and Emotional Ambivalence', discusses the taboos in preliterate societies that surround death and enemies. Wundt's definition of taboo as the 'oldest human unwritten code of law' is discussed. According to Wundt, original taboos described both the sacred and the denigrated, and prohibition was originally on touching an object designated as taboo. Psychologically, taboo is seen as locating fears and thus danger within an object, so that the danger of touching would signify fears of contamination and revenge. According to Wundt, in later social systems, taboo has the function of separating the 'unclean' from the 'sacred', but it was originally a combination of both aspects.

Freud notes the close resemblance between these social taboos and the obsessional prohibitions of some neurotic types of thinking. Neurotic solutions to the gratifications of instinctual needs involve complicated sets of rituals in which forbidden acts are followed by expiatory, cleansing acts. Obsessional thinking tends to involve prohibitions on touching and these prohibitions are particularly liable to displacement onto other actions and objects. Just as obsessional neurosis shows an ambivalence towards unconscious wishes, Freud claims, so taboos express

an ambivalent attitude towards the wishes that are socially prohibited. The sacred and the denigrated are both taboo, we desire what we pretend to abhor. This is because all human relations are ambivalent.

Freud discusses the ambivalence of love and hate and how this is expressed in pre-literate societies in the taboos around death and mourning. That there are appeasement rituals for ghosts of the dead, and social restrictions imposed on killers (of animals and humans) with ceremonials and acts of expiation and pacification, he suggests, demonstrates the emotional ambivalence towards enemies, with loss, grief and mourning co-existing with aggression and jubilant satisfaction.

Whereas aggression might be expected to exist towards enemies and strangers, Freud also finds it expressed in rituals surrounding the loss and death of kin or loved ones. Discussing taboos around admired rulers such as chiefs, kings and priests, he also finds ambivalence "for a ruler must not only be guarded but guarded against". The taboos and ceremonials imposed on leaders in many pre-literate societies not only "revere and exalt the man concerned but also make his life an intolerable burden, reducing him to the bondage of slavery". Ambivalence in relationships to close relations and friends is demonstrated in African, Polynesian and Melanesian totemistic societies in the belief that a dearly loved relative will turn into a demon at the moment of his death and that his survivors can expect nothing but hostility from him. Freud notes that the psychic mechanism in

operation in these rituals is the same as in our forms of mourning. In mourning there is a strong aspect of self-reproach combined with the grief of loss, which Freud identifies as the response to an unconscious wish for the death of the loved person. Similar mechanisms operate in depression, where grief at a severe psychic loss is bound up with rage and unconscious aggression.

In a more obscure way Freud notes that ambivalence is also the basis of conscience, the capacity for judgement, where the aggressive emotion is kept unconscious and is maintained in repression by the compulsive domination of the "good" behaviour. (The severity of what he later termed the superego is an index of the strength of the repressed aggression).

Freud compares neurotic symptoms in the individual to the rituals of social institutions through analogy, and had formulated the comparison in 1907:

One might venture to regard obsessional neurotics as a pathological counterpart to the formation of a religion, and to describe that neurosis as an individual religiosity and religion as a universal obsessional neurosis (3).

In Totem and Taboo the interaction between 'individual' and 'universal' is further elaborated as the concept of projection is developed and as the historical dimension is introduced. The concept of projection is developed in the third essay, "Animism, Magic and the Omnipotence of Thoughts". Animism, an anthropological term, is described as the tendency to project subjective wishes and fears into objects. As a mental mechanism is characteristic of most rituals and magic of pre-literate societies, much

contemporary religion, the neurotic disorder of obsessional neurosis, and a particular stage of children's thinking and play, particularly in the pre-linguistic, infantile, stage. Here Freud suggests a connection between the mental structure of infantile thought, neurotic disorder and aspects of contemporary religion of literate and pre-literate societies. This connection was based on the "doctrine of survivals" which influenced most nineteenth century anthropology, and hence pervaded most of Freud's ethnographic sources for Totem and Taboo. But far from being a crude and racist assumption of the infantilism of pre-literate people, the connection drawn is one which could, eventually, explain the mechanisms of socially destructive forms of projection.

The historical dimension is introduced:

projection is not specially created for the purpose of defence, it also comes into being where there are no conflicts. The projection of inner perceptions onto the outside ... also influences our sense perceptions, so that it normally has the greatest share in shaping our outer world. Under conditions that have not yet been sufficiently determined even inner perceptions of ideational and emotional processes are projected outwardly, like sense perceptions, and are used to shape the outer world, whereas they ought to remain in the inner world. This is perhaps genetically connected with the fact that the function of attention was originally directed not towards the inner world, but to the stimuli streaming in from the outer world ... only with the development of the language of abstract thought through the association of sensory remnants of word representations with inner processes did the latter gradually become capable of perception. (4).

The "language of abstract thought" here is identified as the structure which mediates the projection of internal perceptions and the introjection of external perceptions, and which initiates the capacity of recognition of internal

processes as such.

The socially shared forms of speech and writing are, similarly, mechanisms for differentiating between subjective and objective reality and for documenting the 'real events' of history. What is real for the group as opposed to what is real for the individual. In the fourth essay, "The Return of Totemism in Childhood", Freud presents his synthesis of the sociological, psychological and historical aspects of totemism and advances his theory of the Oedipus complex as the basis of both totemism and exogamy. The essay opens with a review of the anthropological literature. Anthropologists maintain a differentiation between the identification of a clan with a totem animal and the identification that any individual may make with an animal; the first regulates group identity and the second regulates individual identity. Freud's theory traces the paths of association and displacement which link the content of totemic prohibitions and the content of phobias.

Psychoanalysis notes that at a certain age, children readily identify themselves with animals. Ferenczi's treatment of a child, Aspad, who identified both himself and his father with poultry, is clinical material cited as illustration of the way that the emotional relationship to animals can become phobic if the affect is displaced onto the animal. Freud's own case of Little Hans, a boy with phobic reactions to horses, who was treated from 1906 to 1908, is also used as clinical documentation of this type of identification. The Oedipal wishes of the boy are to

get rid of father and to marry mother. These are directly expressed in the games, stories and fantasies of children, and indirectly reappear in adults as the core of a neurosis, after repression.

Freud puts forward the hypothesis that the content of totemic prohibitions (not to kill the totem and not to marry a woman of the same totem) are an inverted form of the two crimes of Oedipus and of the infantile wishes represented in animal phobias. The Oedipus complex, he suggests, is the structure which underlies both neurotic disorder and totemic religion. The totem animal signifies an abstract father, the ancestor of the social group, the originator of identity.

Having recognised the importance of the emotional ambivalence toward the paternal function in obsessional neurosis, religion and children's phobic reactions, Freud turns towards investigating the significance of the maternal function.

A feature of totemism is the sacrificial meal, the killing and communal eating of the totem animal, strictly forbidden on other occasions.⁽⁵⁾ The sacrificial meal of totemism, the Judaic rituals of Passover, and the Christian sacraments of communion with the body and blood of Christ, are all based on rituals of incorporation in which the substance represents a symbolic nourishment and the symbolic nourishment represents bodily nourishment. Signifiers of food are incorporated as the nourishing function is introjected, and the mechanism of introjection has the unconscious meaning of physical incorporation.

The limitations of Freud's analyses are evident here as Totem and Taboo does not elaborate the pre-Oedipal significance of the totem meal and rituals of incorporation, which are left as metaphors of identification. In the place of a psychodynamic explanation of the pre-Oedipal relation to Oedipus complex, Freud puts forward a historical explanation of the origins of totemism and exogamy. The explanation preferred is the well-known 'primal horde' hypothesis so firmly refuted by anthropologists as "an almost wholly untenable fabrication" (6).

If we now bring together the psychoanalytic translation of the totem with the fact of the totem meal and with Darwin's theories of the earliest state of human society ... a hypothesis ... which may seem fantastic emerges ... one day the brothers (of the primal horde) who had been driven out together, killed and devoured their father and so made an end of the patriarchal horde ... in the fact of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength ... After they had got rid of him, had satisfied their hatred and had put into effect their wish to identify themselves with him, the affection (for him) which all this time had been pushed under was bound to make itself felt. It did so in the form of remorse ... the dead father became stronger than the living one had been - for events took the course we have often seen them follow in human affairs to this day. What had up to then been prevented by his actual existence was thenceforth prohibited by the sons themselves, in accordance with the psychological procedure so familiar to us in psychoanalyses under the name of 'deferred obedience'. They revoked the deed by forbidding the killing of the totem, the substitute for their father; and they renounced its fruits by resigning their claim to the women who had now been set free. They thus created out of their filial sense of guilt the two taboos of totemism, which for that very reason, inevitably corresponded to the two repressed wishes of the Oedipus complex. (7)

The real event of primal parricide and its result of the first purely psychological experience, of guilt,

according to Freud, left memory traces which constitute the 'phylogenetic inheritance' of the human psyche, the Oedipus complex. So the Oedipus complex is given a universal explanatory power and a historically specific explanation.

Influences on Totem and Taboo

Darwin's Impact and the Cultural Evolutionists

Jones notes that Freud began to read for Totem and Taboo in 1910 and read comprehensively in the sociology and anthropology of totemism. Frazer's four volumes were undoubtedly his main source of ethnographic material, and Frazer's own explanations of totemism in terms of animism and primitive magic Freud categorised as psychological explanations like his own. The main influence on the overall theory and direction of conceptualisation of Totem and Taboo was Darwin, where influence is to be felt both directly in the primal horde hypothesis, and indirectly through the evolutionary perspectives of the cultural anthropologists Maine, MacLennan, Tylor, Morgan, Lubbock and Spencer.

The conceptual frameworks of the early anthropologists has been documented by Rosalind Coward (1982) who also traces their influence on Freud's clinical practice. Wallace (1983) has characterised the four fundamental tenets of the nineteenth century's cultural evolutionists as comprising: first, a transposition of Darwin's concept of biological evolution onto culture with the idea of a "unilinear and invariable sequence of cultural development from simple to complex". Second, a loose equation was made

between contemporary preliterate cultures and the culture of pre-human ancestors. Third, the belief in the psychic unity of the human species, which justified the use of the comparative method equating contemporary with past culture. Lastly, a transposition of Haeckel's biogenetic law onto psychic life resulted in a doctrine of "survivals", the belief that contemporary individuals have memory traces of behaviours which belonged to the ancestral pre-human population (8). The indefensibly direct transposition of biological principles onto cultural processes was rigorously criticised by twentieth century anthropologists, and historical explanations of cultural difference were soon replaced by functionalist descriptions. However, Freud's aim in Totem and Taboo was to give a historical account of psychic evolution, an aim which is not fundamentally affected by the anthropological critique of cultural evolutionism. Sulloway (1979) has also shown the extent to which Freud conceived his work as part of the biological sciences, and as part of the Darwinian project. Ritvo (1974) has traced the long-standing influence of Darwinism and materialism on Freud's education and training. Ritvo and Scher (1970, 1970b) have applied contemporary principles of evolutionary biology to Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

Freud made direct use of Darwin's Sexual Selection and the Descent of Man (1871) for his primal horde hypothesis. In Sexual Selection Darwin used reported observations of primates, particularly African apes in order to speculate on human ancestry. Using the comparative method (of

comparing other species with protohuman ancestors) Darwin put forward some very tentative speculations:

The most probable view is that primeval man aboriginally lived in small communities, each with as many wives as he could support and obtain, whom he would have jealously guarded against all other men. Or he may have lived with several wives by himself, like the gorilla ... where but one adult male is seen with the band: when the young male grows up a contest takes place for mastery, and the strongest, by killing and driving out the others, establishes himself as the head of the community. The younger males, being thus expelled, would ... prevent too close interbreeding within the limits of the same family. (9)

which Freud seems to have translated into a factual account. As it happens, the gorillas are not an accurate model of human ancestors and this invalidates some aspects of the primal horde hypothesis. (10)

Freud was particularly influenced by Darwin's Lamarckianism, which allowed for the biological transmission of historically acquired characteristics:

Our intention is to base Lamarck's ideas completely on our own theories and to show that his concept of 'need', which creates and modifies organs, is nothing else than the power unconscious ideas have over the body, of which we see the remains in hysteria - in short, the 'omnipotence of thoughts'. Fitness would then be really explained psychoanalytically; it would be the completion of psychoanalysis. Two great principles of change (of progress) would emerge: one through adaptation of one's own body, the later one through alteration of the outer world (autoplastic and heteroplastic). (11)

Ritvo (1964) has shown that Freud's Lamarckianism was not in contradiction with Darwinism of the time although it now appears anachronistic and biologically incorrect.

Following Darwin, Weissman developed a concept of 'soma' and 'germ plasm' which Freud used, especially in formulating a dualism between two sets of instincts and drives, and provided a useful metaphor for conceptualising

the mechanisms now attributed to 'genotype' and 'phenotype' in post-Mendelian genetics.

Contemporary psychoanalysis has continued to make use of ethnological studies as a basis of understanding human behaviour. John Bowlby's studies of attachment rest on a theoretical base of evolutionary principles. Therefore, Bowlby has presented one of the most useful critiques of Freud's Lamarckianism and why it is an obstacle to current comprehension of human nature. (12)

It has often been assumed that the biological dimension of Freudian psychoanalysis is incompatible with feminist thought and many have identified Freud's evolutionism as the main target for critique. Sayers (1982), Mitchell (1979), Rose and Mitchell (1982) and Adams and Brown (1981) are indicative of this critique. To base the structures of the mind in the human body is feared as a repetition of the symbolic equation between 'woman' and 'body', which has universally resulted in a destructive misrecognition of women's needs. The perspective of Totem and Taboo does offer an insight into why there is a universal tendency to equate masculinity with humanity and femininity with animality, in cultural representations of sexual difference. It also offers an explanation for why the 'opposition' of sexual difference is used, universally, as a metaphor for other binary oppositions.

Evolutionary theory today, which includes the history of women and the history of infancy, provides some points of contact with the principles of Totem and Taboo. (These are discussed in chapter three). Nevertheless it is

significant that, in the text of Totem and Taboo, the point of transformation from analytical to historical explanation occurred when Freud reached a threshold in his thinking. Having advanced the Oedipal analysis of totemism and exogamy, it is as if a barrier then prevented him from thinking through the significance of pre-Oedipal processes in psychic and social structure. The ability to think more deeply about the psychological and cultural meaning of what Winnicott terms WOMAN, and the emotional incursion that this requires, is replaced, in Freud's work, by a narrative excursion into prehistory.

In a study of the Dora case history, Toril Moi has proposed that narrativisation in Freud's work could be seen as an attempt to impose order onto an inherently disordered experience, which she equates with masculine and feminine forms of knowledge. This kind of 'secondary revision' in Totem and Taboo may indeed have indicated an inability to broach his own femininity.

Freud recognised this limitation in his theory in 1938; returning to the primal horde hypothesis, he noted:

No date can be assigned to this, nor has it been synchronised with the geological epochs known to us: it is probable that these creatures had not advanced far in the development of speech. An essential part of the construction is the hypothesis that the events ... happened to all primitive man ... the story is told in an enormously condensed form, as though it had happened on a single occasion, while in fact it covered thousands of years and was repeated countless times during that long period. (13)

The narrativisation of 'the events' seemed inadequate to Freud himself. But he maintained the essential aspect of the hypothesis: that events took place, and in this

maintained the historical dimension of psychoanalytic theory.

Cultural analysis and psychic reality

Totem and Taboo, the first of Freud's attempts at constructing a psychoanalytic theory of social structure, articulates the clinical and cultural aspects of the metapsychology. The two aspects are about evenly represented in Freud's writings, with at least half of the work concerned with the application of psychoanalysis to problems of history, sociology, religion, art, literature, mythology, etc.

The interaction of the insights gained from clinical work with the concepts developed in cultural analysis created a constantly developing theory which linked both. Four of the five clinical cases, published as case histories with major contributions to the development of theoretical concepts, preceded Totem and Taboo and each can be seen to have contributed to it. Dora, the case of hysteria (1905), the cases of 'Little Hans' and the 'Rat Man' (1909), and Schreber (1911) all provide parallels to the social processes described in Totem and Taboo, and Freud noted there that:

Neuroses exhibit on the one hand striking and far-reaching points of agreement with those great social institutions, art, religion and philosophy. But on the other hand they seem like distortions of them. It might be maintained that a case of hysteria is a caricature of a work of art, that an obsessional neurosis is a caricature of a religion, and that a paranoid delusion is a caricature of a philosophical system. (14)

If the term caricature implies not only a distortion or exaggeration of negative traits, but also a copy, it remained to be shown whether the neuroses were copies of cultural structure or vice versa. That is, exact

mechanisms of the interaction of cultural and subjective structures remained to be discovered. It would require the concept of superego to formulate this interaction, a concept which was not fully formulated until 1923 in The Ego and the Id. Immediately before this in 1920 and 1921, the two major works on sociological and historical issues, Group Psychology and Beyond the Pleasure Principle use the concept in all but name. Group Psychology uses the idea of an ego-ideal, of projection used in defence against aggression and splitting, Beyond the Pleasure Principle is a full exploration of the vicissitudes of aggression in the psychic apparatus. Likewise, Totem and Taboo can be understood as a theory in search of the concept of superego. Certainly the later works, such as Civilisation and its Discontents (1930), The Future of an Illusion (1927) and Moses and Monotheism (1937) all retrace the themes originally set out in Totem and Taboo, aided by the conceptual framework of the second topography of 1923.

The first topography differentiated between unconscious psychical systems and conscious experience, a differentiation which Freud discovered and conceptualised in the studies on hysteria. The recognition of the Oedipus complex, the central concept of Totem and Taboo, was gradual and was still being tentatively formulated in 1913. At this time Freud was unambiguous about the applicability of concepts developed in or or other aspects of cultural or social theory:

What characterises psychoanalysis as a science is less the material with which it works than the method it applies. Without forcing its nature one can apply

it just as well to the history of civilisation, to the science of religions and to mythology as well as to the theory of the neuroses. Its only aim and its only contribution is to discover the unconscious in psychical life.

Freud's earliest works include research into the non-clinical aspects of psychology, particularly into symbolisation. This became a key concept for The Interpretation of Dreams which linked the neurotic and 'normal' psychic processes. Similarly the unconscious aspects of ordinary life were explored in Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious (1906) in The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901).

In 1907 Freud published three papers which dealt exclusively with this sphere; two on literature: Creative Writers and Daydreaming and Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's Gradiva, and the third was his earliest direct precursor of Totem and Taboo, Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices. This introductory incursion into the psychology of religion set out Freud's analysis of obsessional neurosis as being a symptomatic defence against feelings of guilt. Obsessionals, whether on the level of thought or of actions (ceremonials), systematically elaborate ordinary daily processes into highly formal sets of rules, prohibitions or repeated actions. Freud was struck by the similarity of the patterns of obsessional systems of behaviour and religious practices, and he suggested that they might have in common a latent content and a particular form of defence against unconscious wishes.

At this point Freud was using the model of intrapsychic structures to understand the social structure of religion, and although his use of the comparative method extends itself to 1913, his conclusions in Totem and Taboo are considerably different.

In the following year Freud published "Civilised" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness, in which he further explored some of his ideas from the Studies in Hysteria where he had thought social restrictions of the expression of sexual drives to be an important aetiological factor in the formation of neurotic symptoms. This theme of the dependence of intrapsychic processes on 'external' conditions is one which runs throughout Freud's work, of course, although the solutions he finds for formulating this relationship between inner and outer reality vary considerably in the evolution of his thought.

At this point (1908) Freud accords great importance to the social conventions which facilitate or impede the expression of instinctual impulses. It is the first of Freud's many discussions of the antagonism between civilisation and instinctual life which culminated in Civilisation and its Discontents (1930). In this early paper 'civilised' sexual mores are seen as being harmful to mental health by imposing too severe a demand for restriction and sacrifice upon instinctual life. Although, Freud notices, such restrictions are held to be necessary for the welfare of all within the protective institutions of society, there is a point at which the severity of the demands become too much for individuals. These individuals

then fall ill (with symptoms that are either somatic or mental), and cannot function as members of the society, thus endangering civilisation itself. Freud further classified these nervous disorders into two groups: the neuroses and the psycho-neuroses, the former being more directly the result of an external prohibition on sexual fulfilment and the latter involving a more deep intrapsychic conflict which Freud attributed to 'heredity'. At this point Freud's libido theory maintained the division he set out in 1895 in his paper 'On the grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description 'Anxiety Neurosis'' (SE 3, p. 85-116). In this early essay Freud states that civilisation is built upon the suppression of instincts and identifies three stages to the historical evolution of such suppression. Firstly a stage of 'polymorphous perversity', secondly a stage in which the sexual instincts are expressed only within the limitations of reproductive sexual activity, and thirdly the 'civilised' state which allows only unhampered outlets to monogamous, heterosexual reproductive sexuality. As in the Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905), Freud notes that the human sexual instinct does not originally serve the purposes of reproduction at all but that infantile sexuality simply aims to secure for itself particular forms of satisfaction and pleasure. Freud ends his essay by asking whether our civilised sexual morality is worth the sacrifice it imposes on us in the form of neuroses.

Although it was as early as 1897 that Freud, writing to Fliess, had remarked that "something organic plays a part in repression", it was not until the formulation of the metapsychology that he conceptualised repression as an autonomous psychic function. Intrapsychic conflict, between the UC, PCs and Cs systems, and later between the id, ego and superego, was eventually seen as the most important determinant of repression, both repression proper and the Nachdrängen or 'after-pressure'. The straightforward conflict between external and instinctual demands then, as it is expressed in the 1908 essay, was a short-lived idea in the work of Freud, although it lived on much longer in the minds of those who claimed to be his followers.

The route to the metapsychology passed through two important case histories: the 'Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia', the Schreber case, and the 'History of an Infantile Neurosis', although this was not published until 1918. The former enabled Freud to develop his intrapsychic theory of repression whilst showing how instinctual life is articulated with certain kinds of symbolic structures, notably syntax. Also important from the Schreber case was the concept of the 'return of the repressed', which became central to Freud's thinking on social institutions such as totemism, as well as its manifestation in the guise of symptoms, dreams and parapraxes which are discussed below, in relation to clinical practice.

Another, more minor, precursor to Totem and Taboo was Freud's review of Gance's 'The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words' (1911) in which his interest in symbolism, philology, ancient mythology and symptom formation were united. Here we can see the emphasis on the mechanism of inversion that Freud found in the structures of totemism when viewed in relation to the symptom formation of obsessional neurosis. Totem and Taboo, when viewed in the light of these precursors, was the first of Freud's works to embark upon a fully psychoanalytic theory of social institutions, that is, one which places the Oedipus complex at the heart of both social and psychic realities.

However, whereas his previous works had interpreted social institutions on the basis of individual behaviour (1908) or had, paradoxically, seen social institutions as primary determinants of individual illness; Totem and Taboo gives a historical account of the co-emergence of psyche and 'society'. The interdependent relation between the internal symbolic structures of psychic differentiation and the social symbolic structures of such cultural forms as totemism and other kinship systems (any system which overlays a symbolic relation on a biological reason, in fact) was clearly formulated. The complexity of conceptualising the history of this relation made it impossible for Freud to pursue this aspect of his theory, and he focussed instead on enlarging its psychological significance.

For example, in 'The Claims of Psychoanalysis to Scientific Interest' (1913) he made a strong case for

seeing psychoanalysis as not only complementary to sociology and anthropology but as integral to them:

A similar application of its points of view, its hypotheses and its findings has enabled psychoanalysis to throw light on the origins of our great cultural institutions - on religion, morality, justice and philosophy. By examining the primitive psychological situations which were able to provide the motive for creations of this kind, it has been in a position to reject certain attempts at an explanation that were based on too superficial a psychology and to replace them by a more penetrating insight.

Psychoanalysis has established an intimate connection between the psychical achievements of individuals on the one hand and societies on the other by postulating one and the same dynamic source for both of them ... Our knowledge of the neurotic illnesses of individuals has been of much assistance to our understanding of the great social institutions. For the neuroses themselves have turned out to be attempts to find individual solutions for the problems of compensating for unsatisfied wishes, while the institutions seek to provide social solutions for these same problems. (15)

Later he made a bolder claim:

Sociology too, dealing as it does with the behaviour of people in society, cannot be anything but applied psychology. Strictly speaking, there are only two sciences: psychology pure and applied, and natural science. (16)

The clearest example of subsequent developments in Freud's use of the ideas in Totem and Taboo can be seen in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921). In 1913 Freud gave an account of how the incorporation of the father's body in the totem meal gave rise to a form of identification and thus co-operation between the sons, what he called the 'anthropophagic complex'. In 1921 Freud's theory is of how the introjection of the ideal ego in the form of a group leader is the mechanism of identification that secures the cohesion of groups. Using the artificial groups of the army and the church as examples, he argues

that they share a structure of illusion on which their internal cohesion is maintained; the illusion is shared by all members that there is a benevolent and just leader who loves all the members with an equal love. Through sharing this illusion the individual members can develop ties of identification in which the (displaced) libidinal ties dominate over the aggressive ones. A 'group', as opposed to a collection of people, is defined as a number of individuals who have put the same object in the place of the ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego.

Freud discusses the mechanism of identification and compares the ego's relation to its ego ideal as it is formed in the bonds of hypnosis and of 'being-in-love'. Each situation provides a different permutation of identification, but, most importantly, each example shows how both individual and social structures share a common basis. Once again Freud suggests that contemporary psychological structures can be understood as 'survivals' of their origins in the primal 'horde', which is seen as the origin of the Oedipus complex.

From incorporation, to introjection, to identification Freud uses the groundwork of the metapsychology to build an increasingly complex theory of the relation between 'internal' and 'external' realities. By 1923, when he advances the second topology, the 'structural' theory of psychic differentiation in The Ego and the Id, Freud further increases the number of factors that he brings to bear on his concept of the origin of the Oedipus complex:

If we consider once more the origin of the superego as we have described it, we shall recognise that it is the outcome of two highly important biological factors: namely the lengthy duration in man of his childhood helplessness and dependence, and the fact of his Oedipus complex (which we have traced back to the interruption of libidinal development by the latency period and so to the diphasic onset of man's sexual life). (17)

In the same essay Freud attributes the cause of the neuroses to three factors, firstly the prematurity of human infants, their extended dependence on their mothers, which leads to internal psychic differentiation; secondly the phylogenetic factor of diphasic sexuality so that infantile sexuality is felt by adults as an internal danger; and thirdly the fact of the dynamic interaction between the different psychic agencies (which is actually a part of the first, biological factor). He called these three factors the biological, the historical and the psychological factors. We can now see that they are all in some way dependent on an evolutionary explanation of specific prematurity and diphasic sexuality.

Eventually Freud described the Oedipus complex as a psychological structure which depends closely on the immaturity of the child's infantile body: to an ever-increasing extent the Oedipus complex reveals its

... importance as the central phenomenon of the sexual period of early childhood. After that, its dissolution takes place; it succumbs to repression, as we say, and is followed by the latency period. It has not yet become clear, however, what it is that brings about its destruction. Analyses seem to show that it is the experience of painful disappointments. The little girl likes to regard herself as what her father loves above all else; but the time comes when she has to endure a harsh punishment from him and she is cast out of her fool's paradise. The boy regards his mother as his own property; but he finds one day that she has transferred her love and solicitude to a new arrival.

Reflection must deepen our sense of the importance of those influences, for it will emphasise that distressing experiences of this sort, which act in opposition to the content of the complex, are inevitable. Even when no special events occur, like those we have mentioned as examples, the absence of satisfaction hoped for, the continued denial of the desired baby, must in the end lead the small lover to turn away from his hopeless longing. In this way the Oedipus complex would go to its destruction from its lack of success, from the effects of its internal impossibility. (18)

Here the emphasis is on the internal impossibility of satisfying the Oedipal child's wishful longings. Whereas the emphasis in the earlier works was on the role of social prohibition ('civilised' morality in adults, the paternal prohibition and incest taboo in the case of children), Freud's fully psychoanalytic theory emphasises the significance of the discrepancy between a child's wishes and its physical immaturity which makes the satisfaction of those wishes impossible. This he develops into a psychological theory of the importance of the ego ideal and the superego in guiding the child's impulses into symbolic and substitutive activities (the latency child enters educational institutions in our society).

Whilst no explanation is given of the history of the increasing prematurity of the human neonate, nor of diphasic sexuality to which it is probably connected, Freud correctly identifies these as problems belonging to the biological sciences. The evolutionary hypotheses of Totem and Taboo, although no longer in their anthropological form, re-emerge as necessary elements of the psychological explanation of the origins of the Oedipus complex, as a necessary part of the description of its historical,

ontogenetic development.

The Freudian critique of religion was continued in The Future of an Illusion (1927), where we find an analysis of religion as wish-fulfilment, as a projection of Oedipal fantasy, as a narcissistic compensation for infantile helplessness, as well as being a historical system which reproduces power relations. Religion is contrasted to science as explanations by the pleasure principle and by the reality principle respectively, although science is expected, at most, to be able to give us an explanation for our ignorance. The limits of human knowledge can be explained, scientifically, in terms of the characteristics of our psychological construction.

At the end of his life, in the 'Postscript' to his Autobiographical Study, Freud notes that:

My interest, after making a lifelong detour through the natural sciences, medicine and psychotherapy, returned to the cultural problems that had fascinated me long before ... At the very climax of my psychoanalytic work in 1912, I had already attempted in Totem and Taboo to make use of the newly discovered findings of analysis to investigate the origins of relation and morality. I now carried this work further in two later essays, The Future of an Illusion and Civilisation and its Discontents (1930). I perceived ever more clearly that the events of human history, the interactions between human nature, cultural development and the precipitates of primeval experiences (the most prominent example of which is religion) are no more than a reflection of the dynamic conflicts between the ego, the id and the superego, which psychoanalysis studies in the individual - are the very same processes repeated on a wider scale. (19)

Not only in Civilisation and its Discontents but also in Moses and Monotheism (1939) did Freud continue to develop the psychoanalysis of social structures. Totem and Taboo marks an important turning point in the development of his

conceptualisation of the relative autonomy of intrapsychic conflict:

Sometimes one seems to perceive that it is not only the pressure of civilisation, but something in the nature of the function itself which denies us full satisfaction and urges us along other paths; (20)

Freud noted this inherent psychic frustration in Civilisation and its Discontents (p. 105), and it was precisely his understanding of the centrality of the Oedipus complex, the residue of the infantile experience within the adult, that enabled him to recognise the full significance of his 'perception'.

Clinical concepts and psychic reality

If the development of concepts from the clinical case studies is more obscure, this may be partly because the technique of psychoanalysis does not favour rationalisation and the case studies were published primarily to discuss issues of technique. But there are very clear correspondences between the cases of 'Little Hans', the 'Rat Man' - a case of obsessional neurosis, President Schreber, and the cultural analysis in Totem and Taboo.

The cases each produce a problematic which is fully utilised in the more systematic method of Totem and Taboo. The animal phobia of five year old Hans provides a basis for thinking through the connection between animal symbolism and the psychic significance of the father. Child analysis itself was suggestive of how the forces of infantile subjectivity might remain as psychic 'survivals' in adult life. The case of obsessional neurosis provided a thorough investigation of the mechanism of displacement of affect and meaning in the obsessional's 'ceremonial'. Schreber's paranoia revealed a pattern of systematic distortion of a core phantasy, using projection as the major form of defence.

These three problematics, the symbolisation of the 'father', the mechanism of displacement and the mechanism of projection, that emerged from Freud's therapeutic practice, are synthesised in the cultural analysis of totemism and exogamy. The study of the interaction of clinical concepts and cultural analysis provides certain clues about the conceptualisation of the 'subjective' and

'social' spheres.

In the final section of Totem and Taboo, 'The Return of totemism in Childhood', Freud describes the animal phobia of 'Little Hans' as "negative totemism". 'Hans' was a three year old boy treated for two years by Freud through the intermediary of the boy's father. 'Hans', ordinarily a cheerful and intelligent child, started suffering from nightmares following the birth of a younger sister. Freud's case history describes Hans' play and his discussions, interpreting these as representing many processes that are normal in children of that age. These include the intellectual efforts to find out the difference between animate and inanimate objects around him, and his inquiries into the origins of his baby sister and himself. It also shows how the paths of thought necessary for the true answers to these questions were blocked for Hans, by his own inability to differentiate between the sexes. Hans was unable or unwilling to acknowledge the facts of sexual difference, and sought to displace sexual difference onto the difference between species of animals.

Following an anxiety dream, Hans produced the phantasied image of two giraffes, one crumpled and one with a long neck, which frightened him and which he associated with mother being 'gone'. Hans was also frightened of horses for a number of reasons; "because they had big widdlers", "because they might bite him", and because "they might fall down".

Freud interpreted, over the years, the overdetermination of the animal symbolism. The giraffe

image represented a phantasy of the 'primal scene', the parents joined in exciting activity, and Hans' fear that the mothers' body is damaged (the crumpled giraffe was associated with mother). Hans' fear was of the power of his aggression, activated by his sister's birth, and the phantasy of being excluded from an exciting couple. Hans' experience of his anger was that his mother would be "gone", because rejected by him. His defense against his fears and anxiety was to deflect his aggression onto a substitute object, father, and then almost immediately onto a symbolic equivalent for father: horses. The fears of horses were interpreted as fears of the instinctual impulses emanating from the oral stage ("being bitten" as a reversal of wanting to bite), the anal stage (falling down), and the phallic stage (fear and envy of the horses' "big widdlers"). With his phobia Hans was able to solve his impossible predicament of hating the parents who loved him. He was "free" to maintain a close tie with mother, partly through identification with her (by denying that she, unlike himself and father had "no widdler"), and partly through positive Oedipal triangulation (finding her beautiful, wanting to marry her, etc.). Partly by interpreting to Hans the content of his fears, and partly by maintaining a sympathetic support, the treatment enabled him to work through his phobia and integrate his aggression in a more productive way. Hans' thinking became unblocked, he was able to accept the fact of sexual difference as a reality, not of his own creation, and to use the relation of identification and rivalry with his father to help him

grow.

The case gives detailed descriptions of the boy's conversations and games and the interpretations give clear examples of how the Oedipus complex structures the child's psychic reality. Particularly it shows that a phobia is, initially, without an object. Whether in neurotic symptoms or in the form of social taboo, a phobic defence is originally an instinctual or libidinal phenomenon which becomes projected outward, onto objects, people, specific actions, etc., as a result of psychic conflict.

The mechanism of projection, described above in Totem and Taboo, was not originally created as a defence but is part of ordinary subjectivity, essential to human survival and part of the earliest developmental prototype of symbol-formation. The equation between a subjectively felt sensation such as being overwhelmed by an emotion, and an externally perceived object, is one of the first forms of ego activity. Freud had remarked on this in The Project of 1895:

At first the human organism is incapable of bringing about a specific action. It takes place by extraneous help, when the attention of an experienced person is drawn to the child's state by discharge along the path of internal (neurotic) change, for example by the child's screaming. In this way this path of discharge acquires a secondary function of the highest importance, that of communication, and the initial helplessness of human babies is the primal source of all moral motives. (21)

The discharge of instinctual energy as an automatic reflex becomes an elementary form of signal or communication (given a responsive environment or mother), the discharge of the aggressive impulse takes place through

displacement onto an external object, and in each case a symbolic equation is formed. In the Hans' case history the place of symbol formation is strongly linked to the place of the father in the Oedipal triangle, a place to move from the relation of extreme dependence on mother. These themes are again in evidence in Totem and Taboo in the concepts of emotional ambivalence, and in the study of animal symbolism and fathers.

We have already noted the close relation that Freud identified between religion and obsessional neurosis. In 1909 Freud had published his Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis, the account of a one year treatment of a young man who was severely constrained by obsessional symptoms involving both actions and thoughts. Following his father's death, which he had been unable successfully to mourn, the young man was troubled by a complicated fantasy that unless he performed certain actions, both his father and his fiancée would be anally attacked by rats. Unfortunately, this man's family circumstances had provided an opportunity for him to project his Oedipal wishes onto external reality. He had had, at the age of twelve, a conscious fantasy that his father might die and that he would inherit his money and then marry. This wish, later unacceptable to consciousness, was repressed and returned in the displaced form of tormenting guilty self-reproaches after his father's death. Furthermore his love life was constrained by the guilt, as he repeated the childhood predicament in his adult life; he found himself having to choose between two women he might marry, one with his

father's approval and another - whom he felt he most wanted - in defiance of paternal approval. He was thereby repeating a childhood situation of dependency on his father's approval and the trauma of helplessness. Freud comments that the obsessional neurotic, unlike the hysteric, does not repress his memory of the traumatic event that triggers the neurosis, but represses only the affect. The affect is then turned into anxiety and displaced, metaphorically and metonymically, onto other ideas. The idea of contamination is of particular significance to obsessionals, and the process of displacement which characterises this neurosis serves to allay fears of contamination through contiguity. Similarly in taboo Freud notes the fear of contamination in the original taboo on touching. Freud felt that this case showed even more clearly than the analysis of hysterics how infantile sexuality or pre-genital sexuality is the main component of neurotic disorders.

The third case history that directly influenced the conceptual framework of Totem and Taboo was the study of President Schreber's book, Memoirs of My Nervous Illness. Schreber's paranoia and delusional ideas are interpreted as having a specific latent, homosexual, content and a systematic mechanism of projection of this content. The infantile nature of the homosexuality is evident in the narcissism of the phantasy of being God's lover. Schreber's delusions of being in sexual intercourse with God, of being impregnated by his 'Divine Rays' and repopulating the world with a new race, were accompanied by

delusions of persecution by his former doctor. Schreber's solution to an intolerable anxiety in the Oedipus complex was to identify himself with a pre-Oedipal mother and to enact a series of unconscious phantasies about being joined to father. As the conscious thought of being homosexual was inadmissible to him, it became denied, repressed and split off from the ego through a series of grammatical inversions. The delusions were the 'return of the repressed', whereby internal sensations (both physical and psychical) were felt by the ego to be perceptions emanating from the outside world.

This concept of the 'return of the repressed' was of much use to Freud in Totem and Taboo, particularly in understanding the fear of the dead, primitive magic rituals associated with death. It also has a prototype in the 'animistic' thinking of children and certain primitive magic, in which inanimate objects are attributed with voluntary action and power.

The fourth section of Totem and Taboo contains a detailed theory of the mechanism of projection in its normal and pathological forms and gives an account of its historical origin in pre-symbolic and pre-linguistic society (if the concept of pre-linguistic 'society' is not contradictory). In Freud's hypothesis the gradual creation of internal reality is a product of the interpellation of instinctual impulses through symbolisation or the capacity for abstract thought. Contemporary research into instinctual processes in human behaviour confirms this hypothesis of Freud's, Kubie for example:

It is through the interposition of the symbol that the human system anticipates any thrusting impulse from within or any such impulse from without and corrects, before the responsive deviation occurs. This is indeed the essential distinction between instinctual processes in the human animal and in all other animal forms insofar as they have been studied. (22)

Freud also noted that the "prototype of projective systems is the secondary revision of dreams" (1913, p. 65), which functions to overlay an apparent unity onto the deeply contradictory latent content of unconscious wishes, often narrative in form.

The three case histories quoted all show how clinical material, culled from intensive psychoanalytic practice, gave rise to conceptual problematics, subsequently synthesised in Totem and Taboo. Of particular significance were the concepts of ambivalence, displacement and projection of aggression, the Oedipus complex as a struggle against the symbolic father, and the mechanism of symbol formation itself. The social institutions of totemism, religious taboo and exogamy, provided a form for the articulation of these concepts and for showing the effect of unconscious structures on social formations. Totem and Taboo can be said to be a book in search of a concept. The concept of superego contains and integrates the mechanisms of symbolic, syntactic and narrative function, is "heir to the Oedipus complex", as a development of the ego-ideal, is based on an identification with the father, and serves to mediate the aggressive impulses, thereby creating a conscience or "moral sense".

The real event: seduction or aggression?

It is traditional to look upon Freud's dropping of the seduction theory in 1897 as a decisive step in the foundation of psychoanalytic theory, and in the bringing to the fore of such conceptions as unconscious phantasy, psychical reality, spontaneous infantile sexuality and so on. (23)

The seduction theory was conceived and developed by Freud from 1893 to 1897 in response to the treatment of patients suffering from hysterical symptoms. Before this, Freud had discovered that every hysterical symptom would be understood as a metaphoric or metonymic or overdetermined representation of a traumatic event. But between 1895 and 1897 he attributed a major determining role, in the aetiology of neurotic symptoms, to the traumatic memory of real scenes of seduction. The real event of seduction was held to account for the subsequent repression of sexuality, and its unconscious expression in neurosis. Without the seduction theory Freud was unable to explain the mechanism of repression. Before being a theoretical concept it was a clinical discovery, as patients, it seemed, invariably recalled childhood memories of sexual seduction or passively endured sexual abuse by adults. The traumatic factor identified by Freud in seduction was the helplessness and passivity of the subject. Also the trauma was understood to occur in two stages. First was an event in childhood, a sexual scene which the child could not respond to, the second an event in adult life which associatively reactivates the childhood memory. By 1897 Freud confided to Fliess his discovery that some of the scenes of seduction recounted by his patients were

phantasy:

If hysterical patients trace back their symptoms to traumas that are fictitious, then the new fact which emerges is precisely that they create such scenes in phantasy, and this psychical reality requires to be taken into account alongside practical reality. This reflection was soon followed by the discovery that these phantasies were intended to cover up the auto-erotic activity of the first years of childhood, to embellish it and raise it to a higher plane. And now, from behind the phantasies, the whole range of a child's sexual life came to light. (24)

although Freud continued to recognise the existence of child sexual abuse and the extreme destructiveness of such abuse. But beneath the phantasies of seduction Freud also recognised the Oedipal love of small children for their parents.

Many feminist critiques of psychoanalysis have seen Freud's rejection of the "seduction theory" of the neuroses as a betrayal of the sexual reality of women. They claim that the abuse of girls by fathers, symbolic or actual, is a political reality and that incest is a prevalent and undiagnosed event. Masson's critique of Freud's rejection of the "seduction theory" allies itself with this feminist voice, suggesting that it was Freud's masculinity that led him to disbelieve his female patients' memories of seduction. Masson's work has been contested by many, including Malcolm, In the Freud Archives, and even those critical of the Freudian concept of infantile sexuality and the stress put by Freud on the centrality of the Oedipus complex, nevertheless maintain the necessity of a concept of psychic reality as a relatively autonomous sphere. The "seduction theory" has seen a number of revivals, in 1932 Ferenczi described the adult-child relation as the

"confusion of tongues" in which adult sexuality "the language of passion" forcibly enters the infantile world, "the language of tenderness". Such a formulation reverses the Freudian formula. More recently "child sexual abuse" has become a target of massive public and media concern, with Henrietta Biggs' (the paediatrician from Cleveland) campaign to remove from parental care hundreds of children, suspected victims of child sexual abuse. The force with which this woman and her team carried out her investigations into child abuse was abusive in itself and hundreds of families suffered violent separation in the hands of local health authorities and social services officials who colluded in Dr Biggs' destructive campaign. Similarly Esther Rantzen's "discovery" of child sexual abuse and the subsequent launching of the Childline network is indicative of the popular appeal of the "seduction theory" and of the power of this universal phantasy.

The danger of the seduction theory is that it tends to overlook other more common forms of emotional abuse and neglect in 'ordinary' childrearing practices, and sanctioned by economic and social structures. Also the unconsciousness of the Oedipus complex makes it extremely difficult realistically to manage to understand and to help children who have experienced actual sexual seduction by adults or other children.

Freud ultimately placed seduction among the "primal phantasies" which he traces backed to human prehistory. That is, beyond the psychical reality he sought a

historical reality for the primal phantasies of seduction, castration, and the primal scene, which would be transmitted through mnemic traces, 'memories' of actual experiences in the history of the human species.

What is interesting about Totem and Taboo is that the primal event, the event which hypothetically gave rise to the perceived and actual existence of psychic reality, is an aggressive event. It is the enactment of aggressive instinctual impulses in the drama of "parricide" which inaugurates the first symbol, the first taboo, the original moment of self-consciousness. Far from being a repetition of the doctrine of 'Original Sin', as many critics have suggested, the primal horde hypothesis suggests that the experience of guilt itself must be linked primarily to the vicissitudes of aggressive drives.

Many social scientists and anthropologists find the hypotheses of Totem and Taboo unacceptable because of the historical theory of the real event; they suggest that the theory would be tenable only if it were an account of psychic reality pure and simple: if the "parricide" corresponded only to parricidal wishes, for example. Similarly, biologists have noted that the hypothesis of the transmission of mnemic traces of primal events, in the form of a nucleus of unconscious phantasies, or in the form of the Oedipus complex, is a purely Lamarckian idea, incommensurate with contemporary genetic theory.

What is the relation between the historical event and the psychic event in relation to aggression and to sexuality? In what form is the hypothesis of an originally

historical (non-psychic) event commensurable with contemporary biological theory?

What are the implications of this for contemporary cultural analysis, and for understanding the psychic determinants of historical reality? In other words, in what form does psychic reality impinge on historical reality today?

Totem and Taboo: the functionalist critique

It was not until 1918 that Totem and Taboo was translated and published in an English language edition. The first translation was by Brill. Two of the first English language reviews were by anthropologists, Kroeber and Lowie, both published in 1920. Kroeber and Lowie had both studied with Boas in North America, where the new scheme of anthropology was being established as an academic discipline. Boas, the "founding father" of the functionalist method (Kuper, 1973) had reacted against the evolutionist principles of the 19th century anthropologists, criticising their methods as naive and oversimplistic. The comparative method was criticised for grouping together both prehistoric and contemporary pre-literate societies as if their historical differences could be overlooked. The evolutionist tenet of a unilinear cultural development, across all societies, was dismissed as oversimplistic, and the doctrine of "survivals" abandoned as unscientific and Lamarckian (Boas, 1976). Further, the basic tenet of the "psychical unity" of human species was declared both inaccurate and racist, as it seemed to equate pre-literate society with "childhood" and even "neurosis". Boas also considered that the anthropological antecedents had based much of their historical speculation on very limited ethnographic data. He stressed the importance of field work, limited to single societies, each society to be "fully documented in all aspects", and these researches seen as limited but precise and exhaustive ethnographies of individual tribes or

societies would then provide an empirical basis for later theoretical speculation and interpretation.

However the functionalist debate on ethnographic data, with its underlying assumptions about the primacy of perception over theorisation, concealed a more radical difference of perspective between the psychoanalytic and anthropological interpretations of totemism and exogamy. Kroeber, commenting on research into Australian totemism by Roheim, found that:

It contains a mass of psychological observations most valuable to cultural anthropologists, but so organised as to be unusable by them. None have used it as far as I know. This is not due to lack of interest on the part of anthropologists ... Nor is it due to any deficiency of quality in Roheim's data: these are rich, vivid, novel and valuable. But the data are so presented as to possess organisations only from the point of view of psychoanalytic theory. (25)

If psychoanalytic interpretation appears meaningless, 'disordered', to classical anthropology, this indicates a fundamental incompatibility in their basic principles.

The responses of the classical, functionalist, anthropologists, to Freud's Totem and Taboo and to psychoanalytic anthropology in general clarify the differences in these basic principles. Kroeber, the first reviewer, published Totem and Taboo: An Ethnological Analysis in 1920. it was a violent critique of the cultural evolutionism, attacking Freud's sources (Darwin, Atkinson and Robertson-Smith) and then Freud's method. The latter seemed "endowed with unsubstantiated convincingness" (p. 55), a contradictory criticism no doubt but one which led Kroeber to propose that if psychoanalysts wanted to "establish serious connections with historical ethnology,

that they should start by acquainting themselves with the mass of ethnographic studies already recognised by contemporary anthropology". Aside from the unacceptability of a phylogenetic perspective to a functionalist, Kroeber's main criticism is of the idea that in totemism abstinence and exogamy are necessarily the most fundamental totemic taboos, and that they underlie all other taboos. Such a fact, for Kroeber, could only be substantiated by exhaustive empirical research into all totemic tribes. Yet, despite the criticisms, Kroeber acknowledged that Freud had made significant contributions; that the comparison between taboo customs and obsessional neurosis was "unquestionable", as was the existence of emotional ambivalence, evident in the two aspects of taboo.

Lowie's Primitive Society (1920) also contained a critique of Freud's method from a functionalist perspective. Lowie found the universalism of psychoanalytic hypotheses incompatible with the sociological emphasis on historical and social differences, with social specificity. Yet, in a contradictory way, he also maintained that psychology could explain individual behaviour only, and was inapplicable to social codes.

Boas too was critical of the doctrine of "psychic unity" as used in Totem and Taboo:

We cannot accept as an advance in ethnological method the crude transfer of a novel, one-sided method of psychological investigation of the individual to social phenomena, the origins of which have been shown to be historically determined and to be subject to influences that are not at all comparable to those that control the psychology of the individual. (26)

The insistence on the absolute differentiation of a social fact from psychological/individual fact, consistent with the Durkheimian concept of the primacy of social institutions, inverted the Freudian concept of the necessary relation between the two spheres. In 1921 Sapir formulated questions raised by the psychoanalysis of culture, particularly as this concerned the relation of the individual and society. Was it possible to compare myths to dreams, social structure to individual unconscious? Does a symbol in a myth have the same meaning as the same symbol in a dream? From this it was possible to compare the two concepts of symbolism, the Freudian concept which linked symbols to certain universal meanings, and the sociological concept which assigned to symbols the function of a social form "ready to receive whatever psychic content the individual psychology or the social psychology of a given time and place is prepared to put in them." (27)

In Britain the old school of cultural evolutionists was still vocal, although Westermarck and Frazer completely rejected psychoanalysis, and the new anthropology was more pluralist in method and theory. Rivers and Seligman both saw a potentially productive interchange between psychoanalysis and anthropology, and how each might inform the other. Rivers recognised psychoanalysis as "one of the most important movements in the history of science" (1918, p.11) and Seligman encouraged a young Polish anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski, to test out Freudian tenets in the field. The ensuing thesis, and its contestation by Ernest Jones and Roheim, has formed the

basis of much contemporary theorisation of the interrelation of psychic and social reality. The Jones-Malinowski debate is discussed by Parsons (1969), Mitchell (1974), Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger (1974), Coward (1982), Hirst and Woolley (1982) and Wallace (1983). Briefly put, the debate took the following form: Malinowski, encouraged by Seligman, considered Freud's ideas on the universality of the Oedipus complex to be testable by ethnographic research. Ultimately he concluded that his findings basically contradicted Freud's theory. Malinowski studied the matrilineal, patrilocal families of the Trobriand Islanders in South West Melanesia. Since the mother's brother was the authority figure, the son's hostility was directed towards him and not the father. Furthermore Malinowski reported that Trobriand culture was 'ignorant' of paternity and that the natives did not connect sex with conception or procreation, thus undermining the basis of the Oedipus relation of ambivalence to the father. The matrilineal kinship system resulted in the sister, rather than the mother, being seen as the incestuous object, and childhood sexual behaviour in general was less subject to prohibition than in western society. Malinowski proposed that matrilineal societies produced an "avunculate complex", different from the Oedipus complex of the nuclear family:

To psychoanalysis the Oedipus complex is something absolute, the primordial source ... the fons et origo of everything. To me, on the other hand, the nuclear family complex is a functional formation dependent upon the structure and upon the culture of a society. It is necessarily determined by the manner in which sexual restrictions are moulded in a community and by the

manner in which authority is apportioned. (28)

Since authority was vested in the mother's brother, and since sexual behaviour was unrestricted, save for a taboo on sister incest, the Trobriand sons had no need to fear or hate the father. Malinowski (1916) maintained that the Trobrianders were unaware of the biological fact of paternity: "My firm conviction is that the ignorance of paternity is an original feature of primitive psychology, and that in all speculations about the origins of marriage and the evolution of sexual customs, we must bear in mind this fundamental ignorance."

When Malinowski published his research and presented it to the British Psychoanalytic Society, Ernest Jones took up the psychoanalytic critique (1924). He contested the idea of "sexual ignorance" in primitive culture, maintaining that symbolism in myth indicated a clear unconscious knowledge of the facts of sexual intercourse and its procreative function. A more complicated cultural system of acknowledgement and denial was obviously at work in kinship reckoning. Denial of knowledge of paternity seemed present in a feature noted by Malinowski: "A Trobriander is horrified at the idea of physically resembling his mother, brother or sister, i.e. those who are thought to be his only blood relatives, and is intensely insulted at the mere suggestion; he maintains on the contrary that he is the physical image of his father." (p.155). Whilst Malinowski argued that in matrilineal society there is no social need for knowledge of fatherhood, making the Oedipus complex unnecessary, Jones maintained that matriliney and the

"denial" of paternity were connected as part of a cultural expression of the Oedipus complex: "to deflect the hostility felt by the growing boy towards his father", "the combination of mother-right and sexual ignorance protects both father and son from their mutual rivalry and hostility." This would seem to be confirmed in another feature of Trobriand custom which regards sexual intercourse between man and his wife to be indecent, whereas other forms of sexuality are almost entirely unrestricted.

The avunculate structure introduces the uncle when the son is about eight years old and the uncle is most important around adolescence when the son is to be initiated into social custom and law. Malinowski describes the difference between the status of the two men:

To the father, therefore, the children look only for loving care and tender companionship. Their mother's brother represents the principle of discipline, authority, and executive power within the family ... Later on, when friction with the maternal uncle makes its appearance, he turns, as a rule, to his father once more and their life friendship then becomes settled.

As Malinowski used this description of any 'avuncular complex' to try and modify Freud's theory of the nuclear family complex, suggesting that the latter is a patrilineal reworking of the more basic 'avuncular complex', Jones argues each of Malinowski's points in succession, and concludes that:

It would seem more probable, in my opinion, that the matrilineal system with its avunculate complex arose ... as a defence against the primordial Oedipus tendencies ... The forbidden and unconsciously loved sister is only a substitute for the mother, as the uncle plainly is for the father. On Malinowski's

hypothesis, the Oedipus complex would be a late product; for the psychoanalyst, it was the fons et origo. (29)

To split the paternal function into a 'good' loved father and a 'powerful' hated father is a defence. Thus Jones interprets the matrilineal system as a mode of defence against the Oedipus complex, and notes that totemistic societies, far older than matrilineal societies, are patrilineal. Matriliney then is not necessarily to be seen as a historical precursor of patriliney, and Jones argues that the full expression and internalisation of ambivalence between sons and fathers, as takes place in patriarchal cultures, is a stage of social sophistication.

An additional psychoanalytic interpretation of Malinowski's data was published by Roheim (1947, 1950, ch. 3), who also saw it as indicating an Oedipal complex. The anthropological critique was hindered by what Devereux (1957) has described as: "pedestrian fieldworkers who cannot believe there is an Oedipus complex in their favourite tribe until they discover a custom requiring cohabitation with the mother and slaying the father."

The presence of Oedipal structure as an unconscious force is based on its significance as an infantile predicament, which once repressed, re-emerges in displaced and diverse forms of defence and re-emerges in adult social institutions in all forms of cultural and social symbolism, notably religious and quasi-religious forms.

Nevertheless the debate between the anthropologists and psychoanalysts was vigorous and productive - the issues of matriliney and paternal authority particularly continued to

be debated by Reich, Marcuse, Delenze and Guattari, and recent feminist critics who have contested the idea that the father is the symbol of authority in anything but socially determined form.

The nineteen-forties saw an increasing flexibility in methodology and a greater acceptance of psychoanalytic theses within anthropology. Seligman and Rivers, as noted above, were interested in the interchange of ideas between the two sciences. In 1939 Kroeber made a reappraisal of his 1920 review of Totem and Taboo and acknowledged that many Freudian concepts had been accepted by general science and could thus be used by ethnologists. These included repression, infantile persistences, dream symbolism, overdetermination, and guilt feelings. Unacceptable concepts included "the primal horde and parricide hypothesis, the superego, the castration complex and the psychoanalytic interpretation of specifically cultural phenomena".

Similarly, another orthodox anthropologist, Mead, had directly criticised Freudian hypotheses (1930) but later changed her views significantly by 1963 in 'Totem and Taboo Reconsidered with Respect', when she proposed a reworked phylogenetic theory which includes the parricide hypothesis:

What if indeed there had been deeds, not in the shadowy past of our species, but at a much earlier period before man had developed his distinctively human growth curve with its early spurt toward apparent maturity and then the long slow plateau of latency, followed by a second spurt at adolescence ... Might not the Oedipus complex go back to a real situation in which sons, at puberty - interrupted no longer by latency - were as big as their fathers when they, the

sons, were seven or eight, and the fathers were already declining in vigor and unable to withstand them. (30)

The interruption of latency, making human sexual development diphasic, has been recognised as a crucial phylogenetic stage in the transition from prehuman to human forms. Mead suggests that "primal parricide" occurred repeatedly, as a matter of course since the "son's" puberty would coincide with the death of the adult generation. As the human species evolved, the psyche would have developed to manage the same impulses, as a phylogenetic residue or 'survival'.

The functionalist method which inaugurated anthropology as a recognised social science was based on a critique of the cultural evolutionists of the preceding generation. Given the anti-evolutionist tendency of twentieth century anthropology, it is not surprising that the most widely criticised aspect of Totem and Taboo has been the "primal horde" hypothesis. It has been criticised on a number of counts, firstly because of the inaccuracy of the particular example of gorillas Darwin chose as the basis for his comparative method, also because of the hypothetical status of the event as a historical rather than psychological event. Many anthropologists would agree with Kroeber that the psychological explanation does account for fantasies and unconscious wishes, and would object to this psychic reality being translated into historical terms. Roheim also came to part from the Freudian hypothesis on this point, forwarding his own "ontogenetic" theory of cultural evolution which located the foundation of the Oedipus

complex in the peculiar timing of human infancy (Roheim 1934).

Further debates exist as to whether sexuality and seduction, or parricide and aggression should be understood as physically real or historically real. Of those most critical of the primal parricide hypothesis, Ostow (1978), Ellenberger (1970) and Freeman (1967) are indicative. Freeman psychoanalyses Freud's text, to find within it the latent content of Sigmund's hostile impulses toward Jakob Freud, his father. Most of Totem and Taboo, and particularly Freud's theory of the parricidal event, Freeman claims, can be understood as a secondary elaboration of the author's own Oedipus complex. The religious aspects of totemism which Freud found so compelling was a displacement of the Judaism of his father's which Freud the atheist had rejected. Freeman suggests that primal parricide is a reworking of the biblical doctrine of original sin. Empirical research into a number of totemic societies conducted by Freeman provides data which he interprets in the direction of Kleinian principles, the totem meal representing the incorporation of the mother's body. Also Freeman advances a "non-Lamarckian", more psychological, version of the primal parricide theory based on Freud's own speculation the "the mere hostile impulse against the father, the mere existence of a wishful fantasy of killing and devouring him, would have been enough to produce the moral reaction that created totem and taboo." (1913, p.195).

Ostow (1978) maintains that the book must be read as an allegory about the relation between Freud and his disciples. Thus primal parricide becomes a metaphor for Freud's masochistic fantasy that his psychoanalytic sons, such as the exiled Adler and Stekel, would conspire to dismember and incorporate him. Freud would then be the totem animal of a future clan, who called themselves Freudians, after his name, who would revere him and "function in an orderly organisation". (31)

Equally imaginative is Ellenberger's theory that the primal parricide hypothesis was primarily an allegory of the political events of Europe at the time of Totem and Taboo. Ellenberger notes that at that time Turkey was under the autocratic rule of Abdul Hamid II, and that:

This despot had the power of life and death over his subjects, kept hundreds of wives in a harem guarded by eunuchs, and from time to time massacred entire populations of his empire. In 1908 'The sons banded together against the cruel old man', the young Turks rebelled and overthrew the sultan, in order to start a national community where civilisation and the arts could flourish. These events were watched with keenest interest in Austria more than anywhere else. (32)

Whatever the interpretations offered of primal parricide as a metaphor for psychic or social realities, and each of the three above are equally probable as allegories, Freud's theory requires a historical dimension. Freud himself was quite aware of this and maintained his perspective in the phylogenetic dimension throughout his work, and stuck to the underlying soundness of his conceptualisation.

The Structuralist critique

Initially developed by Saussure in linguistics, the structural method of analysis was adapted to several academic disciplines in the 1950s. Structuralism in psychology, philosophy and literary criticism, and in mathematics followed the structuralism of linguistics. In anthropology the structural method developed by Mauss and Levi-Strauss returned to Durkheim's conception of sociology, which underlay the functionalist critique of evolutionism. Levi-Strauss drew parallels between anthropology and history, both studies of societies other than our own; history studying a different time, anthropology a different region or culture. But the structural method is, by definition, a primarily synchronic method.

Levi-Strauss' structuralism derives from a range of sources (1969), including archaeology, Marxism and the formalist method in linguistics. In an introductory article, 'Social Structure', written for Kroeber's text book Anthropology Today (1952), Levi-Strauss elaborates his concept of social structure as a symbolic "grammar" or "langue". The fundamental symbolic process is that of exchange, and Levi-Strauss characterises society as comprising four levels of exchange. These levels are studied by economics, kinship, linguistics and genetics, as the exchange of goods/money, of women/kin, meaning, and genes. Isomorphism can be identified between the internal relations of these levels of the social structure, although each is irreducible to the others. The method of

linguistics is taken as the basis for studying the structures of kinship, as Levi-Strauss explains in 'Structural method in Linguistics and Anthropology':

Because they are symbolic systems, kinships systems offer the anthropologist a rich field, where his efforts can almost converge with those of the most highly developed of the social sciences, namely linguistics. But to achieve this convergence, from which it is hoped a better understanding of man will result, we must never lose sight of the fact that in both anthropological and linguistic research, we are dealing strictly with symbolism. (33)

Despite a somewhat idealised view of linguistics, the structural method in the ethnology of kinship yielded some productive results. Understood as a symbolic system, kinship could be seen to secure social unity and co-operation, in units larger than the nuclear family, by creating series of linked identities for members of the system.

Exogamy is seen as a system which facilitates the exchange of women, by men, who thereby become related to one another in unambiguous relationship. Levi-Strauss uses the metaphor of "pumping" women from their consanguinous families to redistribute them in affinal groups, the result of this being to create new consanguinous groups." (1952, p.546).

All consanguinal and affinal relations as well as relations of descent can be charted as a system of values, just as phonemic difference creates signification in language. Levi-Strauss uses the same system of identifying bundles of oppositions in cultural elements (kinship, myths and social customs), following the logic of binary oppositions which he understands to be based in the

neurological and even genetic functioning of the body.

Although binary opposition is seen to create emotional capacities, through the anxiety generated by the logical im-possibility of imposing binary thought onto a non-binary reality, the mechanism of binary opposition is not seen by structural anthropologists, as the outcome of emotional capacity. Thus Leach gives a structuralist analysis of the language of insult and obscenity, and the isomorphism of kinship classification and animal classification in our culture, in which he argues that anxiety is a product of the classificatory system.

Leach explores the way in which our own classificatory systems work in similar ways to those of 'primitive' societies. He describes his essay, 'Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse' (1964), as working on the "frontiers" of anthropology, psychology and linguistics. His central theme, taboo, centres on the way in which we construct logical categories of binary opposition through the suppression of a third term. The idea is that we construct semantically distinct verbal concepts through language, such as in naming, only by 'repressing' the boundary concepts that lie between them. What is repressed in the interests of classificatory order, becomes the vehicle for anxiety and is thus 'taboo'. A pun, for example, is funny because "it breaks the taboo on recognising the arbitrariness of sound patterns". Leach describes how taxonomy satisfies the logic of binary discrimination by separating 'thing' from 'environment', just as we separate 'self' from 'not-self'. Whatever is a

mediating category, belonging to both, is "especially interesting" and as we noted, "Quite apart from the fact that all scientific enquiry is devoted to 'discovering' those parts of the environment that lie on the borders of what is 'already known', what is taboo is not only interesting but also especially anxiety provoking." Taboo objects, substances or categories will become either 'sacred', 'valuable', 'important', 'powerful', 'dangerous', 'untouchable', 'filthy', or 'unmentionable'. The former categories are idealisation (in the positive sense) found in religions, the latter are negative idealisation found mostly in taboos pertaining to body functions and substances. The fact that we use latinate terms for 'faeces', 'urine', 'semen', 'menstruation', etc. testifies to the special strength of their 'unmentionable' status. Leach speculates that this may be because that it is in relation to our bodies, and the body of the mother, that we have first to learn to make the difference between 'self' and 'not-self'.

Leach notes that in our classification of kin, non-family and strangers, there is a spatial-logical set of relational statements that can also be found in our classification of animal species, as these are organised in terms of edibility. Just as family members are too 'close' for us to marry, so 'pets' are too 'close for us to eat'. Strangers have a similar position to wild or zoo animals, and 'edibility' of animals occupies a relational zone corresponding to 'eligibility' of humans. The mediating categories of animals such as rabbits, for example, both

domestic pets and wild animals become loaded with affective and symbolic meaning. These are then 'vermin', or they assume sexual connotations, 'bunny', 'cunny', etc. Similarly categories function as terms of abuse, dogs, for example, and 'son of a bitch'.

Leach concludes:

In the English language, classification of familiar animals is by no means a simple matter; it is not just a list of names, but a complex pattern of identifications subtly discriminated not only in kind but in psychological tone. Our linguistic treatment of these categories reflects taboo or ritual value, but these are simply portmanteau terms which cover a complex of feeling or attitude, a sense perhaps that aggression, as manifested in either sex or killing, is somehow a disturbance of the natural order of things, a kind of necessary impiety.

Similarly Levi-Strauss analyses totemism as a social structure, determined only by social facts, and the most fundamental social fact which separates 'culture' from 'nature', in incest taboo. He agrees with Durkheim, the cultural evolutionists and Freud, that totemism is a form of social classification and a religious structure combined. He proposes that what is being worshipped in totemism is the fact of sociality itself. The different species of the totem clans are used as signifiers, signifying the internal subdivision of the tribe into cultural and social groups. Like the incest taboo, on which exogamy is based, the ability to symbolise, name and classify is a fundamental 'social' fact which separates the human species from other animals.

There can be no explanation of the 'origin' of the incest taboo or of language in Levi-Strauss' system, these are taken as the fundamental facts of human existence which

differentiate between 'nature' and 'culture', thereby differentiating between ethology and ethnology, biology and anthropology. Levi-Strauss is critical of Freud's hypotheses in Totem and Taboo as he sees no need for psychological explanation:

Anxiety is not a cause, impulses and emotions explain nothing, they are always results, either of the power of the body or of the impotence of the mind. In both cases they are consequences, never causes. (34)

For Levi-Strauss social anthropology has no need of psychology but, linked to linguistics and the structuralist method, borders directly onto the study of the body. Although the capacity for logical classification, through binary opposition, is seen as being "unconscious", like the deep structures of language, this sense of unconsciousness is very different from Freud's. Rossi (1974) and Badcock (1972) trace the conceptual antecedents of Levi-Strauss' notion of the unconscious as "the architectonic of the human mind", "l'esprit humain", to Descartes' cogito. Yet Levi-Strauss' metaphor of an organ, "the human mind uses myth like the stomach digests food", is not exactly Cartesian and Levi-Strauss has often used organic metaphors as metaphysical metaphors for the mind. More explicitly, Levi-Strauss states that the mental process of binary discrimination is wired into the "circuitry of the brain, through the mechanism of neuron firing across synapses", since neurones can operate only in an on/off, firing/not firing, process.

One consequence of this neo-innatist view of the origins of exogamy and classification is that a new

doctrine of the "psychic unit" of mankind is forwarded. However it is based on the concept of the unconscious as a structure "empty of all content which is not in the first place the outcome of form." (Badcock, 1981, p.46).

Curiously the diagrammatic representation, given by Levi-Strauss, of the totemic classification and its mental basis is almost identical with that made by Freud of the relation of the group to the ego ideal.

For Levi-Strauss the totem species signifies the membership of the individual to the social corpus by the subdivision of the tribe into exogamous groups named and identified as such. (35) For Freud the group with a leader "is a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego." (36)

For Levi-Strauss the body and its parts are, equally, metaphors for the internal divisions of the social corpus; they operate as a code or symbolic system quite independently of their biological function. For Freud the body is the source of the id, and organic forms will be experienced in the unconscious and will make their presence felt, as metaphors, in cultural forms and language.

For psychoanalysis the "incest taboo" exists not primarily as a social fact so much as a consequence of the Oedipus complex; the father is an external projected form of the psychic structure. In totemism the concept of species is a signifier which takes the place of the group leader or "external object" in Freud's diagrammatic

representation of group psychology. The totem animal represents the image of the father, an internal image which is also introjected from external reality, the environment. This is the process which is characteristic of the superego, simultaneously a product of the id and an internalisation of parental authority, and its displacement in the form of cultural authority, such as taboos and laws. The totemic prohibitions on sex and slaying/devouring are social forms of superego controls of aggression towards the other members of the group, so that ambivalence is transformed into co-operation. The superego is not simply an inner representation of social authority, as the structural or sociological view would have it, but comprises a substantial element of unconscious aggression which is redirected against the self within the psychic organism.

As has been noted, Freud lacked the concept of superego in 1913 when he formulated the basis of a psychoanalytic theory of culture, but the concept is a necessary consequence of his hypothesis of the determining influence of the Oedipus complex. Levi-Strauss uses the concept of unconscious in a pre-Freudian context, and assimilates the concept of superego to his notion of the symbolic. The symbolic, schematised as the ensemble of social codes formulated as law, is conceptualised as a language. Thus Jakobson's linguistic 'axes' of metaphor and metonymy are assimilated to the Freudian unconscious, primary processes of condensation and displacement. This assimilation negates the recognition of the powerful emotional contents

of condensation and displacement.

In an illuminating discussion between Levi-Strauss and Green, the differences between the psychoanalytic and anthropo-logical concepts of the unit of kinship are classified. Whereas Levi-Strauss, as we have noted, treats the avunculate as a necessary term of kinship structure for matrilineal societies, Green interprets the avunculate as a representation of the unconscious image of the phallic woman, "a masculine mother." (1979, pp.99-107).

Further possibilities for the interaction of psychoanalysis and anthropology are evident in Lacan's work. The Lacanian theory of symbolism, based on Saussure and Jakobson, is very much closer to Levi-Strauss' formalism than to Freud's theory of interpsychic conflict. Whereas Levi-Strauss and Lacan take prohibition (taboo), the *nom-du-pere*, or the symbolic order as a primary principle of the social fact of human nature, Freud takes the Oedipus complex, or Darwin's concept of instincts and needs, as the primary principle of social reality. The dialectic between sociohistorical structure and unconscious phantasy is further explored in the following chapters on the origins of language and the origins of writing.

A more absolute reinterpretation of the structuralist critique of Freud has been made by Badcock (1981), who maintains that Levi-Strauss' debt to Freud is larger than his debt to Rousseau, Marx, Mauss or Saussure. Structuralism in social anthropology, suggests Badcock, is a Cartesian psychoanalysis with a desexualised unconscious. Therefore:

Structuralism may survive as a permanent addition to human understanding, particularly in the fields of anthropology and sociology. It may again, on reflection, come to be seen as little more than a Cartesian heresy in the history of psychoanalysis.

Badcock offers arguments that Levi-Strauss' work can be seen as falling into two categories. The first includes The Elementary Structures of Kinship (1949), Totemism (1962) and The Savage Mind (1962b). The second includes Structural Anthropology (1958), Tristes Tropiques (1955) and the several volumes of Mythologiques. These two categories of Levi-Strauss' work, Badcock suggests, are structural equivalents and reworkings of Freud's Totem and Taboo and his Interpretation of Dreams respectively. This vindication of Freud's belief that sociology and anthropology might, one day, become extensions of applied psychoanalysis may seem an exaggerated claim. However it also supports the more dialectical thesis forwarded by Devereux in The Anthropological Roots of Psychoanalysis (1957):

No-one is trying to reduce anthropology to psychology, the two types of explanations are complementary even though both are practically compendious ... leaving aside naively narcissistic quarrels about jurisdictional spheres, we are obliged, by history and genetics, to postulate that culture and the human mind did not simply come into being "at the same time", but are, in the strictest sense, co-emergents" and, "Whatever modification of basic psychoanalytic theory that biology or - for all I know - astronomy may make necessary, anthropological data do not call for any basic modification of the psychoanalytic system, though they may necessitate further refinements of the scheme.

The Neo-Evolutionists

A number of neo-evolutionists researching into human origins have re-opened the discussion on Totem and Taboo in order to "salute Freud" (Becker, 1961), to revise the primal parricide hypothesis (Fox, 1980) or even to "reinstate the Freudian phylogenetic theory in its undiluted form" (Badcock, 1983). Others such as Sahlins (1960) and Tanner (1981) propose theories of human origins which can be used to assess the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of the Freudian hypothesis. A brief review of the salient points made by these theorists is followed by an account of how the concept of superego can be used to integrate Freudian theory with anthropological and biological science.

The neo-evolutionists focus on a number of interrelated features of human 'nature', the capacity of symbolisation (language or abstract thought), the demands of social co-operation (identification) and the modification of aggressive and sexual responses.

Sahlins' Origins of Society advances an economic hypothesis which identifies the capacity for the repression of sexuality as the major factor in human adaptation. Like New World primates, (and unlike Darwin's mountain gorilla), proto-human hordes would have been divided into two groups, males and females with their young offspring. This division made "marriage" into the decisive economic institution of society, whilst sexuality came increasingly under cortical control rather than hormonal control, and kinships systems were established as early symbolic

organisation. Sahlins suggests "it [marriage] was what the manor was to feudal Europe, or the corporate factory system is to capitalism", so that a major division of labour between the sexes required an alliance between two elements of social production. Fox builds on this thesis noting that a crucial social transition takes place when young males necessarily move from one social group (females with young) to the other (all male), corresponding to the rites de passage of puberty rites and initiation, in contemporary societies.

From the perspective of a phylogenetic theory of human adaptation, Fox advances a modified form of the primal parricide hypothesis:

In the beginning the sons were kept from the women of the horde by the fathers, and much as they would have liked to, the sons did not kill their fathers but simply withdrew from sexual competition with them. The frustration of their sexual drives was so intense it was frightening to them, so that when the fathers died (or were driven out), the sons couldn't face sexuality with the women. Their sexual interest in them was so intense however that while they took other people's sisters to bed with them, they acted out the fantasy of having children by their own sisters. They claimed the sisters' children as their own and denied the genitor any part in the process. Thus at one stroke they eliminated the fathers as authorities and as sexual rivals.

This historical theory of the origins of matriliney and the avunculate complex is based, like Sahlins' theory, on the idea of the human horde as divided between two social groups, the conflict between 'generations' of males occurring whenever a young male made the necessary transition between the first group and the second. The crucial adaptation to 'frustration' would be possibly only by the transfer of sexual and aggressive behaviour to

voluntary control, presumably through abstract thought and by symbolisation. The neocortex evolved from the amygdala, part of the limbic system. The limbic system, the most primitive part of the brain, responds primarily to the sense of smell. In early vertebrates the cerebral hemispheres were mainly concerned with sense of smell but in mammals, particularly humans, general co-ordinating functions became predominant.

One hypothesis on the evolution of the cortex from the more hormonally-regulated limbic system has been proposed by Spuhler (1979), and cited by Fox. Given evidence from neuroendocrinology of the probable sequence of physical changes in the ancestral human population, Spuhler suggests that bipedal gait was the first of the evolutionary developments to affect sexuality. He assumes bipedalism was developed for hunting and that this change of posture affected the hormonal system which in turn affected the oestrus cycle and sexuality. Pre-human sexuality was undoubtedly governed by the oestrus cycle, through hormonal and thus olfactory signals, but with growing cortical control of functions of the 'small' brain, oestrus cycle was replaced by continuous female receptivity.

Spuhler's hypothesis becomes the basis of Fox's speculations on language origins, as tool-making must have originated alongside bipedalism and have created the lateralisation of the brain hemispheres. Fox considers the neural communication between the lobes may have been the basis of language proper, with the lobes becoming specialised for thought and the limbic system for emotions

and bodily sensations. Spuhler's hypothesis is called into question by Tanner's theory of evolution, which challenges the popular, but apparently incorrect, view of early man as a hunter. However Fox does provide an integrated theory of what Devereux termed "the coemergence of culture and the human mind". Fox presents a biological thesis:

In the evolution of conceptual thought via language, pressures towards social classification may have been supremely important and these would have become true 'selection pressures' demanding mental equipment that could cope with them. But these conceptual processes concerned with the ordering of social relations were being programmed into the hominid individuals by Natural Selection over time, not being induced by socialisation in each succeeding generation. (37)

So the symbolic function, claims Fox, is to be accounted for in terms of Natural Selection and does not require Freud's neo-Lamarckian stance towards phylogenesis and ontogenesis. Tanner (1981) proposes a new theory of the evolution of humans from our ape-like ancestors, its novelty lying in the fact that it accounts for the role of women in the transitional population and development. Tanner analyses a number of androcentric myths about human origins, one of which is the image of man as the "big game hunter", cited by Spuhler and Fox as the basis of tool-making, cortical development and the sexual division of labour:

What if early hunting consisted largely of australopithecine females with tools sitting for long periods collecting insects, rather than of those long-imagined ferocious groups of half-human males racing after big animals? (38)

Tanner's account, using chimpanzees as a model of the ancestral population:

The closer a primate is to humans, the slower the infants grow during the first year after birth. Therefore for the special extended mother-child interresponsiveness so important to human learning ... it is chimpanzees that are the most likely to be similar to the ancestral population. (39)

The social bonding, co-operativeness and bonding which all anthropologists agree to be the human innovation, Tanner suggests, was initially developed between mothers and infants. This sharing relation was facilitated by natural selection as increased maternal investment in offspring became a part of human 'cultural' adaptation through learning, the result of the extended dependency of immature offspring on parental protection. What sharply differentiates Tanner's theory from Fox's is her emphasis on the interaction of sexual selection and natural selection. In sexual selection, the partner investing most in offspring appears also to be the one who exercises sexual selectivity:

Females would have reason to choose friendly males who, like themselves, only rarely (and selectively) engaged in displays against other, transitional, hominids, but who were nonetheless skilled in defense and protection against predator species by intimidation displays and by throwing objects. This could have interesting implications for understanding conflict and aggression and how they relate to our human nature. Sexual selection also increased the contribution of males who exhibited frequent bipedalism (necessary for keeping up with female gatherers). Further obvious visual clues such as a bipedal male's erect penis could have attracted female attention and action. As the female hormonal cycle and ovulation came to contribute less to the timing of her arousal, it is not illogical that visual clues became increasingly significant. If so, sexual selection for bipedalism would be yet another instance of natural and sexual selection together advancing the species' adaptation farther along the same path for both females and males. (40)

Instead of changes in morphology, such as genital swellings and olfactory signals, females developed other

forms of communication, "physical spacing, gesture, facial expression, eye contact, posture, vocalisation", to signal to males that they were willing or unwilling to engage in sexual intercourse. As hormonal control of oestrus diminished, females took on the role of initiating sex, overtly soliciting or choosing not to respond to hormonal readiness. The whole range of communicatory behaviour associated with sexuality thus became to some extent referential, not just expressive, and contributed to the evolution of language and speech.

Tanner notes that attempts to construct an account of language origins have been hampered by the dualistic concepts characteristic of Western languages, polarising differences between emotional and rational, verbal and non-verbal, relational and referential, gestural and vocal communication, etc. Noting also that all mammalian communication systems use most of the senses: visual, olfactory, auditory and tactile, one or two of these senses usually dominates, followed by the auditory-vocal channel, whilst humans use primarily language and speech, and use visual and tactile senses for non-verbal communication.

Again drawing from chimpanzee studies:

Chimpanzees and other primates have the intellectual capacity to abstract and exchange information between different sensory modalities, specifically vision and touch. Cross-modal perception was thought to be an exclusively human trait. (41)

Tanner, like Fox et al., considers cross-modal perceptions as a precondition for language and symbolisation. As the chimpanzee studies show that communication is learned within the mother-infant dyad, it

is social, affective and intellectual. The consequences of these studies for constructing an account of language origins are considered.

Humans have three times the neo-cortex size to be expected of a primate of our body size, with more "association cortex" than would similarly be expected. It receives input from all cortical sensory areas connecting tactile and auditory, tactile and visual, visual and auditory, etc. and is the anatomical base for cross-modal perception. Like Fox, Tanner emphasises asymmetry as a main feature of brain function:

The important feature of human brain size is not size but assymetry ... Asymmetry may relate to functional specialisation necessary for symbolising and therefore may well be a prerequisite for language. (42)

Tanner notes that language, as a system "whereby through the recombination of a limited number of arbitrary elements (phonemes) it is possible to produce vocal signs for a potentially endless variety of meanings", is to be understood as one element of an integrated communicatory system, also including a wide range of non-verbal communication, that evolved as the peculiarly human adaptation. She suggests that the question is "How did the somatic, expressive communication already present in the ancestral population mediate the development of the more arbitrary symbolic and referential aspects of the fully human communication system?" (p.128).

This development was simultaneous with an increase in the mediation of the interaction between organism and environment by social organisation and symbolic components.

Tool-using and social communication were the earliest forms of such mediation.

Large canine teeth disappeared with female sexual selection, oestrus swellings in females were no longer selected for, due to reduced visibility of these body areas due to bipedalism. The large multifemale and multimale groups were flexible to various forms of social organisation, "flexibility in social organisation is as characteristic of the hominid adaptation as tool-making or bipedalism" (p.218), and the social "system" consisted of various forms of dispersion and aggregation.

Finally this was possible because "culture is part of our biological heritage; the capacity for it evolved along with other characteristically human qualities", and culture is transmitted, through various symbolic forms, through the adaptation to learning which takes place in the mother-infant interaction over a number of years early in ontogenesis:

The biological capacity for symbolisation formed the foundation for the development of many human lifeways ... The ability to symbol, [sic] that is the capacity for conceptual thought, made possible the development of the variety of human cultures ... cultures are the accumulated and systematised resultants of the ability to symbol. The symbolic products, whether tools, language, kinship organisation, art, are the outcome of historical processes; and it is these that we commonly call 'culture'.

Badcock (1980, 1983) has also advanced a neo-evolutionist theory which integrates Freud's hypothesis into a more complete account of the history of the species. He suggests, thus, that the Oedipus complex was the first psychic structure to exist in a historical perspective, its

point of origin is seen as being the point at which cultural transmission (ritual, custom, socio-symbolic structures) emerged as a mechanism of equal adaptive value to the species as genetic inheritance. As this coemerged with language it provides a historical context for the concept of superego, the psychic mechanism genetically given in certain anatomical and morphological structures, which is the internal condition for the acquisition of culture and learning:

In modern individuals, and almost certainly also in the past, internalised verbal commands and prohibitions are of the first significance in the acquisition of the superego and manifest this aspect of themselves in the auditory hallucinations of accusing and scolding voices so often found in paranoia. (43)

Elsewhere, Badcock (1986) has sought to assimilate the Freudian metapsychology, especially the second topography (id, ego and superego), into contemporary sociobiology. Badcock then suggests that the problematic concept of 'altruism' in biology and behavioural genetics is an exact correlate of the Freudian concept of unconscious identification. To transliterate classic Freudian concepts into the language of sociobiology may secure for them a usage which is guaranteed by general science, thus allaying the fears of the anthropologists. But if the cost of this is the loss of the integrity and autonomy of the psychoanalytic perspective, the price may be too high. Moreover, Ritvo's inquiry into the history of biological science: Darwin as the source of Freud's neo-Lamarckianism argues that the concepts of superego and identification fully provide the mechanism of transmission of "acquired

characteristics".

Freud himself seems to have provided the mechanism for the inheritance of acquired characteristics in humans, a species singularly free from natural selection, and that is the mechanism of identification in general and superego identification in particular. Freud saw the superego as derived both from identification and from the id, which is the biologically inherited portion of the personality and therefore, according to modern theories of biology, no longer subject to change through use and disuse. (44)

This formulation has been found acceptable to many psychoanalysts, who found Freud's neo-Lamarckianism deeply unacceptable, such as Hartmann (1958), Kris (1956), Jones (1957) and Erikson (1950, 1959).

What is the superego?

The superego has been compared to an omniscient eye, the glaring searchlight of conscience, or the eye of moral surveillance. However its primary form of existence is almost certainly connected with auditory perception. A classic contemporary view of the superego is Hartmann's:

To the superego, substructure of the personality, we attribute the functions of self-criticism, conscience, and the formation of ideals. The acceptance of moral standards is considered a natural step in ontogenesis. The superego has a biological root in the comparatively long dependency and helplessness of the child of the human species, which also means increased importance of the parents for its development. The superego develops out of identification with them, to which, in subsequent layers of development, identifications with others are added. Also obvious in its genesis is a socio-cultural factor which accounts for an important segment of tradition formation. (45)

The visual aspect of some superego processes may derive from its roots in the id, where unconscious images or "primal phantasies" are the main forms of libidinal and aggressive content. The superego's relation to the ego is always critical, partly, as Hartmann suggests, through identification with parental demands and prohibitions. But part of the critical aspect of the superego derives from its function as the mechanism for the redeployment of intense, unconscious, anger and aggression. Although a considerable disagreement of theories exists, within psychoanalysis, as to the origins of aggression, whether it is innate or primarily a reaction to frustration, it is in a very basic sense innate in that it is indissolubly linked to the prematurity and helplessness of human infancy. An important aspect of individual adaptation to social codes

and co-operation is the transformation of ambivalence into "object constancy" or love, by the turning inwards of aggression towards the self, in the form of conscience, self-criticism, or in the formulation of ideals. Finding creative uses for aggressive energy is a continuous cultural, and individual, task. Many aspects of religion, education, institutional routine, sports, etc. provide creative uses for aggressive energy and other sublimated forms have included developments in the arts, notably modernism, in the sciences and in culture. Flugel's (1955) book on the cultural aspect of the superego includes the following historical speculation:

The development of the capacity to turn one's own aggressiveness inwards and then to put it in the service of morality represents ... a very ingenious device of Nature for rendering man fit for social life, and it may have played a very significant part in making him a gregarious animal capable of participating in an elaborate and hierarchical society in which both assertion and submission are required. The process might be compared in some respects to those tours de force of phylogenesis whereby an organ acquires new functions in the course of evolution, as when the pineal gland, originally a cyclopean eye, became endowed with the power of manufacturing a secretion which appears to have function of retarding the onset of maturity (itself an extremely important characteristic of humanity). (46)

Flugel's analogy of the transformation of the function of an organ can also be found in a number of other studies of the superego, notably Isakower (1939) and Comfort (1960). Isakower draws very strong connections between the anatomy and morphology of the ear and acoustic sphere, and the functions of the superego. Isakower shows that the human ear is the phylogenetic descendent of an organ called the otolith in earlier creatures. The otolith apparatus is

still found in animals such as crustacea where it is used as an orientation device, incorporating a piece of the environment and turning it into an integral part of the organ. In humans the auditory sphere, language and sound has an analogous function: "The auditory sphere is one of the most important apparatuses for the regulation of relations with the environment, an arrangement absolutely specific for the human species." The ear, or inner ear, is well known to be an organ regulating the physical sense of balance, and Isakower notes that the human ear is related to the otolith "organ of equilibrium" both phylogenetically and ontogenetically as they originate in a single tissue. How is the auditory sphere related to the superego and its functions of self-criticism, conscience and morality?

Isakower claims that:

It is self-evident that experiences and impressions of the environment are necessary in order that a superego may be built up. It is just as self-evident that these experiences and impressions are acquired by way of sense perception. But can one imagine that purely optical sense-impressions, for example, by themselves and without showing any linguistically ordered structure could possibly lead to the building up of a logical or ethical judgement? Without further discussion, this question can be answered in the negative. But the claims of the auditory sphere to be the primary plane in the building up of the superego would thereby be established. (47)

Somewhat logical as an argument, "it cannot be the visual sphere, therefore it has to be the acoustic sphere", rather than historical or psychological. But this was argued before the structuralist conception of culture as a symbolic system, in which language was centrally important. Isakower reaches very similar conclusions by way of a different tack. Language is the "nucleus of the superego",

he claims in many ways, following Freud, but, importantly, "It is not the content of language that is characteristic of the superego but almost exclusively the tone and shape of a well-organised grammatical structure."

This is a startling remark as it, so closely, correlates with the problematic produced by linguistic study of syntax, of knowing the speaker-hearer's "intuition" which judges whether sentences are correct or incorrect, meaningful or not, as this cannot be judged in any objective or scientifically predictable way. The shape of syntactic structure, then, might be related to superego structure. Isakower emphasises that his proposition is

nothing more than an elaboration of what Freud meant when he replaced his first graphic representation of the structure of the mind by another. In the first of these, in 1923 in The Ego and the Id, the ego has on one side 'an auditory lobe' ... in the repetition of this sketch, in 1933, in his New Introductory Lectures, and which in other respects is practically unaltered, this auditory 'lobe' is no longer seen. The corresponding position is now occupied by the superego. (48)

Comfort (1960) attempts an interrelation of biology and psychoanalysis by showing the connections between Darwin's Descent of Man and Freud's concept of superego, "Darwin relates the evolution of morals to the family situation and reaches, as it were, the edge of the superego concept." Comfort's aim is to show how infantile sexuality, and its corollary, the Oedipus complex, has its basis in aspects of bodily prematurity characteristic of humans other primates. The Oedipus complex, and its resolution in the castration complex, is described by Comfort as "a temporary organ", following Ferenczi (1954) who explored two aspects of the

Oedipus complex. Ferenczi notes that "Oedipal responses not only have every appearance of being in some way built in, but they look uncommonly like a temporary organ with a function", which he connects to the enigma of infantile sexuality. Since, in all other species, sexuality is a correlate of reproduction, the mention of infantile sexuality "at once calls for some explanation of what sexuality is doing in infancy." Comfort speculates as to whether this might be an adaptation of an old mechanism (sexuality) to a new function. The repression of an immature sexuality, through the castration complex, would produce an adult sexuality very easily displaceable, not necessarily fixed to an object, or in other words adaptable. Furthermore, Comfort speculates, "It is not impossible that by necessitating repression and a mind divided actively into conscious and unconscious levels they produced the most significant adaptation in mammalian history, the emergence of symbolic thought."

To summarise, Flugel, Isakower and Comfort, integrating psychoanalysis with evolutionary theory, describe the superego as an organic phenomenon. The complex interactions of symbolisation, language, morality or ethical judgement (which Freud claims is based on the "no", the negative aspect of the pleasure principle) and self-criticism, or the redeployment of aggression toward the self, are constitutive of the superego, which is based partly in the id and partly in identifications. This main mechanism of cultural transmission is the "heir to the Oedipus complex", the point at which passionate feeling

towards the parents is replaced by interest in culture and the outside world, through symbolic displacement.

It is impossible to conceive of the superego as a purely cultural or social phenomenon, as social sciences would maintain, nor as a socio-neurological mechanism, as Levi-Strauss claims, in his concept of "The Symbolic" (1949, 1950). Equally misleading is Lacan's description of the superego as the unconscious "other", a linguistic structure, or the codes upon which symbolism is based. The Law, or the Nom-du-Pere, of the Lacanian symbolic father is an effect of the superego and not its cause.

Totemism as a symbolic projection of superego

The psychoanalytic theory of totemism, advanced by Roheim, extends Freud's analysis to include contemporary knowledge of evolutionary theory and of the pre-Oedipal processes in the human subject. In many respects Roheim's (1945) theory is confirmed by Tanner's evolutionary theory, as they both take the mother-infant dyad as the basic social unit, and consider the historical development of women and children as an integral part of social structure. The 'primal horde' is used as a loose term to describe "a period in the transition in phylogenesis from a pre-human to human form of society", and the act of parricide is replaced by a concept of a necessary repression of aggression in ontogenesis. Roheim's "ontogenetic theory of culture" stresses the importance of the neotenic human development towards prematurity at birth and extended dependence on maternal protection and interaction, in the creation of culture. The vulnerability of human infants to separation and loss resulted in the creation of internal objects, symbolising both the self and the loved object, as an attempt to find security against object loss.

Defence systems against anxiety are the stuff that culture is made of ... the threatening event of object loss suffered by the infant in a series of separation traumas from the mother forms the basis of our terms regarding the final farewell.

The destructive impulses are particularly activated by separation traumas and totemism is described as a defence system against destructive impulses in particular. "That totemism is something that unites, that it is a bond, an identification, can hardly be doubted. The origin of all

identification lies in the identification of mother and child, and this again is partly a reality and partly a denial of separation or of separation anxiety."

Like Freud, Roheim attributes the Oedipus complex to biological factors:

The tie between mother and child lasts longer than in any other species, and the sexual impulse has already attained a measure of object-directedness when the only available object is the mother ... the ego is a protection against premature inundation of the libido. Our relative immaturity would therefore explain the traumatic nature of the early sex experience. (49)

This is true of human culture generally and does not specify the characteristics of totemic species worship and exogamous clan structure. Roheim continues:

Totemism as a social institution is a defence against separation anxiety. As a religion it represents the genitalisation of the separation period and the restitution that follows destructive trends. As an aid to man's struggles with internal and external difficulties, it is a balancing apparatus consisting of a series of projections and introjections. Finally in its mythical form ... it represents our efforts to deal with the problems of growing up, aided by the illusion of an eternal future. (50)

The worship of the totemic species is seen as a form of ancestor worship, a pre-literate form of historical or genealogical reckoning. That totemism is directed at gaining security against earliest forms of separation anxiety is obvious in the ritualistic totem meal. The phantasies of killing and devouring are as much directed at the imaginary mother as the symbolic father. Whiting's (1958) empirical study of paternal and maternal identification in the totem meal of totemic societies supports this view.

But it is not only the earliest, oral, forms of separation that totemism defends against; Oedipal conflicts are eminently present in initiation rites. All totemic cultures have puberty rituals which Roheim analyses as castration symbolism, (circumcision, tattooing, pulling out of teeth, body mutilation, scarring, social isolation, etc.):

The puberty ritual is an institution which aims at diverting the libido of boys from their mothers; partly by offering them substitute mothers, women of their own, with the approval of society; and partly by offering them their fathers and their own selves as love objects.

Bettleheim too analyses initiation rites as combining separation from mothers and, simultaneously, identification with mothers (1955). But the rites are symbolic, and language, with other non-linguistic symbolic systems, works in conjunction with the ego to secure the separation of internal and external reality. Language and symbolism comprise the articulation of internal and external reality. As Freud noted, "It was not until a language of abstract thought had been developed, that is to say, not until the sensory residues of verbal presentations had been linked to the internal processes, that the latter themselves gradually became capable of being perceived." (51) Before language, all internal processes would be directly projected onto the outside world, Freud suggested. With the extension of language into writing and a historical sense, awareness of the internal world would develop. Early forms of symbolisation should demonstrate this articulation of internal and external reality.

Roheim frames the problem of totemistic symbolism in a different way:

Rites are representative; they aim at making up for object-loss by retaining the memory image of the object. The functional value of the memory image lies in its protective aspect; it is a substitute for object loss, and from the point of view of libido economy an intermediate object between object love and narcissism. The defence mechanism connected with the formation of the image is fission (splitting) and condensation. The fission of the original (parental) images leads to series formation, which unites society in a series of 'good objects' as represented by the classificatory system. (52)

The classificatory system is seen as a product of a relation of emotional, libidinal and dynamic factors a set of 'good objects' representing fusion of self and other.

This theory gives a psychoanalytical interpretation of totemic structure which shows the specificity of totemism to pre-literate culture, and also describes the common psychological basis of preliterate and contemporary social and cultural structures. It presents a theory of the "psychic unity of mankind" that is non-reductive and is fully historical.

"In the beginning was the deed"

Freud's concluding words of Totem and Taboo have presented cultural historians and cultural analysts with a difficulty that has often resulted in the book being dismissed or overlooked. Girard (1978) calls it "a work that has been unfairly treated and literally scapegoated by the whole intellectual community" (1978), p.208) and calls for a reinstatement of the theory of a real event at the origins of symbolism and language.

I have examined a number of works that criticise, or occasionally confirm, Freud's hypothesis and his theoretical framework, and consider the psychoanalytic paradigm to offer a more substantial account than the anthropological critiques. To assimilate the concept of superego to that of a socio-symbolic law, whether this law is understood as incest-prohibition, or as linguistic law of exchange, is to misrecognise the fundamental infantile derivation of the superego.

It has been suggested that the prohibitory aspect of the superego comes not so much from the internalisation of social or parental restrictions, as from the immaturity of the Oedipal child itself. The incapacity for fusion (incest) and procreation is traumatic and the ego protects itself by displacing an internal inability onto an external prohibition. Social forms of prohibition, such as the incest taboo, would therefore reflect the Oedipal predicament.

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The origins of language

From the perspective of the life sciences, the origin of symbolic thought is a meaningful problem but one which will never be solved in the absence of the proper historical information. Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology.

It has often and confidently been asserted that man's origin can never be known: but ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge: it is those who know little, and not those who know much, who so positively assert that this or that problem will never be solved by science. Darwin, Introduction to The Descent of Man, 1871.

There are some sound reasons for doubting the value of a search for origins, and structuralists from a wide range of practices have given priority to the synchronic study of a particular structure over the study of its origin, evolution and development through time. The structuralist paradigm has usefully identified the difficulty of accurately knowing a pre-social or pre-linguistic moment or process. Levi-Strauss has emphasized the point that, from the moment of their existence, socio-symbolic structures such as "representations collectives" or institutional forms, have generated a difference in kind, and not merely of degree, between the natural and the human worlds, which means that the post- and pre-symbolic worlds cannot be usefully related. Levi-Strauss suggests:

Whatever may have been the moment and the circumstances of its appearance in the scale of animal life, language could only have been born in one fell swoop. Things could not have set about signifying progressively. Following a transformation, the study of which is not the content of the social sciences but that of biology and psychology, a crossing over came about from a stage when nothing had a meaning to another where everything possessed it. (1)

It is important to preserve something of this insight if we are to avoid oversimplified naturalist explanations

of contemporary social predicaments. Similarly, Lacan and Derrida suggest that the search for origins in metalanguage is an intellectual equivalent of the human subject's search for a centred ego or self: each is doomed to discover that the centre is an illusion fostered by the very language through which the subject is divided.

More pessimistic still is the knowledge, from Freud, that every idea of an origin is bound to be strongly influenced by unconscious phantasies of bodily origin. Because the unconscious contains the repressed memories of infantile sensuality the question of origin, as theoretical question, will always carry the unconscious meaning of "Where did I come from?", so that all scientific investigation of origins, if indeed a metalanguage is possible, will have to take cognisance of certain ubiquitous unconscious phantasies such as the primal scene, seduction and castration (2), and will have to find a way of working through the relation of conscious, scientific discourse, to its own unconscious origin.

This suggests that the greatest barrier to knowledge of ourselves, our society and its institutions, is human narcissism; and that it is because our desire to know the world and its history is preceded by and to a large extent motivated by an inconclusive unconscious search for knowledge of, and control over, one's own bodily origin that the theoretical questions of origin and history are especially difficult to think through.

Nevertheless, challenges to structuralism's "confident assertion" of the impossibility of knowing an absent origin

can be found. Marxism emphasises the way in which knowledge of the history of relations of production contradicts a theory of the primacy of exchange relations. Foucault stresses the historical force of power relations as they have altered the balance between different social and institutional discourses. Freud emphasises the primacy of the Oedipus complex as a determinant of individual and group behaviour, of institutions such as religion and marriage, and ultimately of 'Civilisation' itself. More recently Rene Girard has criticised structuralism for its avoidance of the problem of origins "in order to maintain a pure formalism". (3)

But perhaps the strongest challenge to the formalism of cultural-determinist orthodoxy in the social sciences has come from the feminist thought of the past two decades. The feminist challenge to existing cultural and scientific definitions of human needs has generated a new paradigm. From this perspective, outlined in chapters one and two, it is possible to question the explanatory omnipotence that has been ceded to cultural determinism, and so to rethink the questions of history.

The evolutionary perspective of psychoanalytic materialism offers a time scale which reinstates the significance of cultural prehistory. The challenge to anthropocentric historical scale is clear, and the difficulties in recognising this have been characterised as akin to the disbelief in the Copernican, Darwinian and Marxist revolutions (Althusser, 1969, p. 218), and characterised as a "blow to narcissism". If feminism

reveals the androcentric bias of most social theory, and if anti-racist politics have revealed a similar white, and Euro-centric bias, the two can also be shown to share an implicit critique of anthropocentrism in theoretical perspectives. This bias can be seen in the conventions which have led historical societies to be defined in terms of literate and non-literate culture. The status accorded to the visibility and tangibility of written records of history reflects the overvaluation of the Logos inherent in the "Western Episteme" (Kristeva, 1979). Williams (1976) notes the etymology of the term 'history' and the variations in its meanings brought about by the emergence of philosophy and then Marxism. The word 'prehistory' was used for the first time in 1851 in the title of an Archaeological Study of Scotland. (4) By the late nineteenth century, archaeologists, naturalists and anthropologists, such as Lubbock and Tylor, were using the term freely. The concept then began to be defined with increasing precision, going back to the system of classification formulated by archaeologists between the 1830s and 1850, which differentiated between different stages of technological development. This system, which names the Paleolithic (Stone Age), Neolithic (Iron and Bronze Ages) and Historical (subsequent to the invention of writing) stages of cultural development, was adopted by the British Museum in 1866.

However, an alternative system of classification, based on economic rather than technological differentiation, was also in use, invented in the 1830s by Norwegian

archaeologist Nilssen. Of influence on Morgan's Ancient Society (1877), Nilssen's economic classification used categories of 'savagery' (hunter-gatherers) to herding and nomadic agricultural society, to civilised society, characterised by writing, class divisions of labour and the usage of money. Morgan's theory in Ancient Society, subtitled 'Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilisation' was of profound influence on Marx and Engels' historical materialism.

Morgan identified seven periods of prehistory (mistakenly identified as 'ethnic periods'): Lower Savagery spanned the emergence of 'homo sapiens' through to the discovery of fire; Middle Savagery from fire to the invention of the bow and arrow; Upper Savagery from bow and arrow to the invention of pottery; Lower Barbarism from pottery to the domestication of animals, Middle Barbarism from domestication to the smelting of iron ore; Upper Barbarism from iron to the invention of a phonetic alphabet; and Civilisation, which started from the invention of the phonetic alphabet and included writing, the keeping of records and history 'proper'. Not as systematic as Nilssen's classification, which was entirely based on 'economy', Morgan's system used an eclectic method of economic, technological and cultural features as demarcations of prehistory. Although Western European archaeology has maintained the use of technological classification, Soviet prehistorians have changed their systems several times. They started with the three technological ages of 'Man', then used the Morgan-Engels

system after the revolution until the 1920s, at which point the Morgan system was adapted into an economic system of 'grades'. The three grades (comprised of pre-clan society, clan society and class society. This system is still in operation in Soviet archaeology.

So it is clear that theoretical differences create differing conceptualisations of the past, and construct different histories. Chronology is possibly the most straightforward aspect of historical knowledge but is not a means of solving the differences in explanatory, or causal history. Since 1945 carbon dating (a by product of nuclear physics) has facilitated very accurate chronological classification of any organic substance, and this has helped to establish connections between artefacts and evidence of social structure. Again recently, molecular genetics has facilitated very accurate estimates of the divergence of distinctly human apes from the other apes and apelike primates which preceded us. Although chronology is crucial in providing a time-based structure for rigorous speculation on the causes and sequences of human prehistory, it offers only clues about the causes and determinants of change. As we have seen, the theories we have, with which to interpret empirical data, are based on differing concepts about the defining characteristics of human beings, and are to some extent mutually exclusive.

Some of the narrativisations of historical sequence are clearly motivated by unconscious fantasy. Before the more systematic accounts of prehistory were formulated in the mid-nineteenth century, a more irrational concept of

prehistory, popular in The Enlightenment, was current.

Ellenberger characterises this as part of the The Enlightenment "search for the primitive world":

A world which was supposed to have existed at the origin of mankind, a world endowed with supreme knowledge and unfathomable wisdom. This world was believed to have been destroyed by some catastrophe, but that parts of its traditions had been secretly transmitted by a chain of a few initiated wise men. (5)

Several metaphors of inundation, such as the biblical deluge and the submerged Atlantis, were popularly linked to the catastrophic destruction of "primitive civilisation". Many mystical societies, such as Masonic societies, used rites which were supposed to reproduce some of the imaginary ancient Egyptian rituals. This curious mixture of rationalism and fantasy might indicate an unconscious recognition of the pre-Oedipal world of infantile sexuality (supreme non-rational knowledge) which is destroyed catastrophically at the Oedipus complex and castration complex. Inundation might indicate grief and submergence might be a metaphor of repression.

The question of the origins of language is being asked as a part of a more general inquiry into the meaning of origin, and the history of symbolic thought.

Some of the strongest arguments put forward within the feminist applications of structural psychoanalysis have claimed that the experience of being female is largely determined by the structures of symbolic thought, and by social structure.

For example, the Althusserian-Lacanian view described in chapter 2 claims that sexual difference has no

representation in the unconscious. Because of the structuring function of the binary logic of symbolic thinking, the signifier as a mark of difference can only represent presence or absence. With the phallus as primary signifier, femininity is thus always represented as an absence, or void.

If this is true, and if this description of the psyche is to be used for negotiating social and psychic change, some account must be given of how masculinity and femininity may be realigned in relation to signification.

If it is true, it is also possible to "test" this historically. What is the history of the signifier? What differences are there between auditory, vocal, visual, graphic representations? What basis do we use for differentiating between arbitrary and motivated relations of signifier to referent? The theories of the origins of language have here been subdivided into two sections. The origins of speech and vocal auditory signification are discussed first in order to compare a range of twentieth century hypotheses. Secondly the origins of writing are discussed. Three "transitional" scripts from Sumeria, Egypt and China are discussed. The signification of sexual difference is particularly explored, in order to rethink the theory of the primary of the phallus as signifier.

Theories of the Origin of Language

Social anthropology suggests that all societies have their origins myths which weave together unconscious phantasy and environmental information into a pattern or narrative. Most of these myths make some reference to the origins of language, often as a gift from the gods (Ancient Egyptians) or as the cause of a fall from grace (Old Testament).

The ubiquity of the association between language origins and some concept of paternity would seem to bear out structuralist theory. In particular, origins myths tend to isolate the word or the name as a single entity, or naming as a moment which marks a transformation from chaos to order, or as Levi-Strauss suggests - from "a stage where nothing had a meaning to another where everything possessed it." This aspect of the Genesis myth is well known and has been documented by Leach (7); whilst other biblical references to the origins of language such as the story of the Tower of Babel and the story of Adam naming the animals are more obscure, but can be understood as part of a theological tradition which uses the search for origins in order to resolve questions about divinity. Another such version is Herodotus' story of the Babylonian king who wanted to know which language was the most elementary (and thus the most divine) and so shut away a child from birth to see which language would be spoken spontaneously. (8) Although, obviously, the experiment was unsuccessful and cruel, contemporary researchers such as Lenneberg have noted how language learning can be almost unimpaired by the

most extraordinarily adverse environmental conditions, and this has been used to support innatist rather than religious hypotheses. There seems to have been no scientific speculation on the original language until the middle of the nineteenth century in western Europe and it remains a local and comparatively limited phenomenon.

Some similarity remains between the theological (mythic) and scientific (theoretical) traditions in that linguistic theories tend to stress the absolute nature of the difference between animal and human communicative behaviour, as did the theological accounts, whilst evolutionary theories tend to find continuities between human language and its precursors. Within scientific investigation of the origin and evolution of language and speech there is much controversy over the dating and placing of 'homo loquens' or 'homo symbolicans' within the variety of fragments of the history of homo sapiens. Most authors agree that the presence of language, or the capacity for symbolic behaviours, is one of the principal characteristics of homo sapiens, and that it is closely linked with toolmaking. Language, like ritual and other social behaviours, does not fossilise, and so its presence must be dated through inferences of the archaeological record, or by comparative genetics. In the first case it is quite easy to be precise about timing since the carbon 14 process can be used to calculate the ages of organic matter such as in the cave paintings and sculptures of the Aurignacean period of the Upper Paleolithic, the evidence of ritual burial of the Chellan, Lower Paleolithic period,

and the tools of the earliest hominids, the homo habilis of the Pliocene. This limits the range to about two million years, and raises questions about how to define language and speech within the broader category of symbolic behaviour. The second method of dating language origins come from comparative zoology and consists of using molecular genetics to establish the evolutionary closeness of the human lineage to related primate species. This method gives very accurate information about the point at which homo sapiens diverged from the hominid line.

Neither method can positively date the emergence of language, but these are both used to inform speculation and in some cases to support a specific claim about language origins.

A great deal of controversy exists over the definition of what is meant by 'language'; as noted above, the theories tend to fall into two groups - those that stress the differences between language and other forms of communication and those that stress the continuity between language and symbolisation. The first group could be said to be offering an account of the emergence of homo loquens; as it tends to focus on language as a vocal auditory system, its theories are mainly linguistic. The second group is concerned with 'homo symbolicans' and sees vocalisation as one aspect of symbolic behaviours and its theories tend to be mostly anthropological.

Comparing the two kinds of theories can usefully demonstrate how discourses inflect their object and terms of reference. Hockett (1960), Lenneberg (1967) and

Liebermann (1975) as proponents of the primacy of speech (homo loquens) theory point out that language is a system of combining a limited number of phonemes to produce vocal signs for an unlimited number of meanings. Hockett has produced a useful list of thirteen distinguishing characteristics of language. Lenneberg and Liebermann have tended to study the physical evolution of the vocal apparatus. Proponents of the 'homo symbolicans' theories have often linked the origins of language to gesture, Revesz (1946) and Jespersen (1922) note that much non-verbal communication accompanies language in humans. Anthropological theories such as Ashley-Montagu (1976), Macdonald Critchley (1960), Girard (1969) and Gans (1981) argue that important transformations in social behaviours and organisation accompany, and even determine the emergence of speech.

The History of Theories of the Origins of Language

Two recent studies, Stamm (1976) and Aarsleff (1976, 1982) describe the vicissitudes of the question from classical antiquity to present day linguistics. They note that contemporary synchronic analysis of language, whether phonological or syntactic structures, has long since displaced the philology of nineteenth century Europe. Yet Chomsky has located his work within the tradition of Cartesian innatism, which, coupled with the rationalist tradition of eighteenth century philosophy, formed the foundations of the French school of Port Royal grammar and logic. During the eighteenth century there was also a great deal of speculation about language origins, counter to the Port Royal tradition. Rousseau's essays proved immensely popular and influential, and Condillac's "Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge" (1746) was widely read and very influential in Germany in particular, where it led to the Berlin Academy offering a prize for the best essay on language origins. This was won by Herder in 1772. Debate flourished and the eighteenth century essays tended to mix empirical research with speculative methodology such as in Lord Monboddo's "Of the Origin and Progress of Language" (1775). By the nineteenth century, Aarsleff notes, a clearer distinction between rationalism and empiricism had been drawn and the philosophical and theological debates tended to give way to the new positivism. The debate was taken over by the naturalists, ethnologists and anthropologists. Darwin addressed human origins and language origins in The Descent of Man (1871)

and many applied his concepts of Natural Selection from The Origin of Species (1859) to the question of language: of these, Schleicher (1863, 1865), Muller (1865), Bleek (1867) and Haeckel (1867) have recently been reprinted in the series Amsterdam Classics in Linguistics (1983) as more interest grows in historical linguistics. In the 1860s, however, the popularity of the question generated so many essays that in 1866 the Societe de Linguistique de Paris established a standing rule barring papers on the origins of language from its sessions. This prohibition, coupled with the increasing influence of the comparative method (of nineteenth century ethnology and anthropology) had the effect of "channelling the energy of linguistic investigators towards synchronic analysis and the gathering of more information about existing languages in their contemporary forms" (9). Stamm (1976) provides a useful classification of the nineteenth century theories into six types, using the names under which they were popularly known. Aarsleff (1976, 1982) links the nineteenth century theories to their intellectual antecedents in eighteenth century philosophy where he follows Locke's argument against neoplatonism and against Descartes, and also emphasises the influence of the philosophical tradition on Saussure: "Both the doctrine of linearity of speech and the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign are fundamental to Condillac and his followers" (10). A previous resurgence of interest in the question is noted, by Aarsleff, in the Renaissance in Britain and Europe, where Jewish mysticism and neoplatonism joined forces producing strange version of

Cabbalistic, Old Testament and Egyptian, Roman and Greek mysticisms. A complete collection of writings on the question can be found in Gordon Hews' two volume bibliography on Language Origins (1975). The mystical, mythical, theological and philosophical accounts have been omitted in order to focus on contemporary language origins theories.

The origins of Homo Loquens: the vocal-auditory theories

Hockett (1960) uses comparative zoology "to help reconstruct the communicative habits of the remote ancestors of the hominid line", and draws up a table of the incidence of 13 characteristics as these occur in other species' communication systems and in human non-verbal communication. These include arbitrariness (thereby excluding visual and onomatopoeic forms), discreteness, displacement (referentiality), the use of morphemes in structures of binary opposition, as well as dependence on the vocal auditory channel (excluding gestural language, and such animal phenomena as the bee dance). Thus Hockett devises a system for identifying the precise form of language which is species-specific to humans. The evolutionary aspect of his theory examines the interrelation between anatomical transformations and social changes, focusing particularly on how mechanisms of natural selection led to an increase in the length of childhood dependency and helplessness, in order to extend the period of plasticity and learning. Language, he suggests, is a genetically transmitted capacity for extra-genetic learning, and with selection for language would come a

selection for "prolonged childhood", allowing for greater extra-genetic transmission of behaviour and information. This description clearly echoes the Freudian thesis of the retention of the Oedipus complex in adult subjectivity. Lenneberg's work, The Biological Bases of Language (1967) provides much of the data and framework for most contemporary investigations of the origins of language, as well as for Chomsky's researches into the neuroanatomy of innate syntactic structures. The evolution of the human mouth, larynx and diaphragm is documented via the fossil record of cranial capacity, skeletal posture and dentition. Although it is more functional than evolutionary biology, and Lenneberg avoids speculative reconstruction, his data is used by Lieberman in On the Origins of Language (1969) to support his Darwinian hypothesis that "earliest changes in dentition and bipedal gait facilitated the evolution of the supralaryngeal vocal apparatus". Lieberman argues that environmental changes in habitat, the development of bipedalism, allowed for changes in the vocal apparatus which provided the basis for language and thereby facilitated the convergence of several factors later associated with natural language such as encoding, cognitive ability and brain lateralisation. Hockett, Lenneberg and Lieberman all cite neoteny as the most important evolutionary mechanism associated with language:

The human neonate is considerably more immature at birth than our closest of kin, with a concomitant prolongation of differentiation periods and increased susceptibility for various factors to impinge upon the direction of further development. The acquisition of language plays a definite part in this developmental history, its emergence occupying a fixed position

within the array of developmental milestones, and there are definite indications that its development is contingent upon a certain aspect of what might be called cerebral plasticity. (11)

Neoteny is linked to but separate from the phenomenon of increased prematurity at birth. Jay Gould notes that in selection for an increasingly narrow pelvis for bipedalism, there is a contradiction between this and the simultaneously increasing brain size, which leads to greater prematurity at birth (12). Neoteny and paedomorphosis are the evolutionary mechanisms which describe the retention of formerly juvenile characteristics by adult descendants produced by the retardation of somatic development. These theories raise important points as to the value of a recapitulationist account of the relation between phylogeny and ontogeny, and this will be explored below.

The origins of Homo Symbolicans: gestural theories

As noted above, theories which locate the origins of language primarily within the context of other symbolic behaviours tend also to be those which focus on the extent of the continuity between human and non-human behaviour. In this they are unlike the linguistic (and theological) models which tend to emphasise the difference of kind, rather than degree, between human and non-human communicative acts.

Johanneson (1949), Diamond (1959) and Revesz (1956) all propose theories of the gestural origins of language. Diamond, unfortunately repeats some of the most doubtful of our origin myths as he conjures up an image of "man the

hunter, ferocious groups of half-human males racing after big animals" (13):

Language emerged out of requests for assistance addressed by one male person to another in those small semi-nomadic groups out of which human society seems to have developed. What were the meanings of these requests? It is suggested that they were requests ... for action requiring the maximum bodily effort, to break, cut, smash, kill.

Johanneson advanced a theory that gestures of the body, and especially the hands were the first communicative system and that vocalisation followed in an attempt to imitate, with the speech organs, the gestures of other parts of the body. He gives particular examples from the Semitic and Indo-European languages and argues that these are both forms of a common linguistic system dating from 10-20,000 years ago.

Revesz, Montagu and Critchley all propose theories of social primacy as direct challenges to the philosophical tradition of cerebral primacy. Critchley's version is that selection would have favoured speaking proto-hominid groups because of the survival value of toolmaking and co-operation. Language use may then have modified behaviour by increasing the differentiation between thalamus and cortical systems of the brain thus facilitating control of behaviours through impulse inhibition, and thus giving rise to morality and altruism:

In this way there arises - again indirectly out of the beginnings of language - the beginnings of choice as to conduct. ... so arise ethical and altruistic considerations. The earlier stages of these aspects of behaviour can be visualised in the animal kingdom in the instinct of maternal solicitude. This instinct is restricted in time and place; with the achievement of adulthood the young animal no longer receives maternal solicitude. The instinct too is restricted to the

immediate family group. Altruism extends from beyond the family circle to the clan only with the attainment of human status. (14)

Here Critchley is following closely Darwin's argument in The Descent of Man which attributes the moral sense to early humans as an innate characteristic possibly resulting from the family form. In Freudian terms, such behaviour requires a fairly sophisticated psychological mechanism, the inhibition (and perhaps projection of repression) of aggressive instincts would presuppose A) a mechanism for the internal redeployment of instinctual energy, B) a mechanism for prohibition and C) would result in the capacity for deferral of instinctual discharge and so the beginning of a sense of time. As Montagu has noted,

The areas of the cerebral cortex for hand, tongue and speech situated within the left hemisphere, as well as for the area for hand gestures during speech are all closely associated with the areas for logical analytical operations and temporal, sequential ordering. (15)

Badcock (1986) suggests that "a dynamic, psychological mechanism could influence behaviour just as effectively as a more directly genetically encoded determinant ... but with an added advantage: an ability to interact dynamically with the environment". In Freudian terms, this view locates language at the point of interaction of organism (instinctual aggression and environment (group, clan), and with internal transformations in the brain mechanisms dealing with sensory and cognitive processes (thalamus and cortex). It also connects brain lateralisation and increasing complexity of intra-organism instinctual and sensory co-ordination, with the beginnings of the

differentiation between conscious and unconscious mind, between ego, superego and id. Altruism, or the moral sense, would be explicable as identification, particularly unconscious identification, in which id impulses are redeployed by the ego having been inhibited or prohibited by the superego.

What are the consequences of this speculation for understanding the origins of language? Badcock's recent work on altruism suggests:

If we make the by no means unreasonable assumption that human language evolved originally in large part as a medium of communication for reciprocal altruism, then it is also not unreasonable to suggest that the apparent imperfections of human languages, may all reflect not merely the need for this means of communication to convey information but also its usefulness in communicating misinformation. (16)

If language is to be located as part of a mechanism for maintaining unity through redeployment of aggression, it is not unreasonable to see in it at least a residue of that aggression it serves to deflect. Badcock suggests also that psychology evolved in order to detect "cheating" in others and resulted in the by-product of a capacity for "insight", just as language is a means for misinforming, as much as for the transmission of information.

"Misinformation" is Badcock's term for the use of communication in order to conceal malevolence or simply non-reciprocation. Where language would seem to imply a reciprocity or exchange between speaker and hearer, Badcock identifies language as a social form of "controlled hate". Badcock's theory is a synthesis of sociobiology and psychoanalysis which aims at integrating an account of

social change, psychological change and somatic change; these functions he sees as being co-ordinated in the human subject by means of the superego, ego and id respectively. This aspect is more closely argued in chapter 3.

Tanner (1982) could be classed with the gestural theorists although she makes no specific reference to gesture; her account of language evolution acknowledges that most linguistic analyses have stressed the differences between the communicative behaviours of different species, but she suggests that "the challenge is to hypothesise the development from cognitive, social-affective ties to symbolic thought, language and culture." The most important question, she maintains, is to know how the somatic, expressive communication already present in the ancestral population mediated the development of more arbitrary symbolic and referential aspects of the fully human communicatory system. She notes that:

Chimps and other primates have the capacity to exchange information between different sensory modalities especially vision and touch. Cross modal perception was thought to be an exclusively human trait. This ability to make transfers between the senses is considered to be a necessary neurological basis for language, it lies at the basis of conceptualisation, which is fundamental to symbolisation. (17)

What Tanner calls the "association area" of the human neo-cortex is very extensively developed, allowing for a number of different permutations of transformations between visual, auditory, vocal and tactile senses.

Tanner's theory provides an integrated biological and anthropological account of human evolution; its stress on the centrality of women's place in that evolution means

that it is compatible with a psychoanalytic account of the origins of culture.

Eric Gans' The Origin of Language (1975) follows Girard's work on the origins of totemism and ritual in violence, sacrifice and ritual scapegoating. According to Girard, violence arises from the "mimetism" that is so highly developed in human beings due to the prolongation of childhood dependence. His theory posits some degree of intrapsychic organisation, such as a rudimentary ego structure, to have been in operation in the early human behaviour he describes. Although Girard's theory is explicitly set against Levi-Strauss' circular arguments, it is nevertheless quite dependent on a Durkheimian concept of the social nature of representations collectives. Girard, however, uses the Durkheimian matrix as the basis of a historical theory, and posits a definite originary structure as marking the transition from a natural to a social order. Unlike Levi-Strauss, the primal structure is not the taboo on incest but is centred on the attempts to regulate violence. Girard's hypothesis unfolds in five steps:

- 1) Whereas all species have some capacity for mimicry and mimesis; as has been discovered by the natural sciences (18), humans have developed a greater capacity for imitation than any other species. This may be because imitation is a process which underlies most learning in infancy and childhood.

- 2) Whereas other species have mechanisms for the instinctual control of intraspecies aggression, such as

dominance hierarchies and 'pecking orders' which serve to control the strong rivalry generated by mimesis, human beings have no such instinctual mechanism. The extremely strong rivalry is controlled instead by the representation of the group.

3) However, in order for this representation to take effect, to become a subjective reality, an event must take place, or have taken place. Such an event could be narrativised as follows - the crisis of tension or aggression generated by the "order of the double" tends to seek stability through discharge of that tension onto an arbitrarily designated individual, a victim. (The designation may not be entirely arbitrary in that the victim may be a "magical figure", a twin, a diseased or crippled person or someone of strange appearance or origin; but the victim is arbitrary in relation to the crisis of which he or she is seen to be the cause). With the discharge of aggression onto the victim, possibly through murder, the group is formed from the dyad. Violence, once acted out, projected, "creates the condition for the coincidental emergence of representation".

4) The discharge of violence leaves the group in calm and quietude, giving rise to the perception of the murdered victim as the object of "the first non-instinctive attention" of the group as a whole. In other words, the presence of the group as a group, is represented to itself via the intermediary of a common object - the body of the victim - which comes to signify the whole process and thus to signify "sacredness". This is the first transcendental

signifier, Gans claims.

Finally, 5) the process is repeated indefinitely; the situation is periodically reproduced with pre-designated victims, scapegoats, who are subjected to physical or symbolic sacrifice. The process has become a ritual in which the sacrifice is a representation of the "original" event.

Gans argues that it is the original purpose of language, as a form of representation-in-general, to mediate "the imposition by the group on itself, of a non-instinctive restraint that defers further violence and constitutes thereby the origin of all cultural deferrals". (19) Deferral is an important characteristic in two senses because it is the basis of the reality principle, and because it is through the deferral of meaning that signifying elements can be combined into articulated forms. Gans translates Girard's sociology into a theory of representation.

Gans suggests that vocalisation in speech derives from the cries accompanying the externalisation of aggression, but that the referential function of representation (Hockett's category of displacement) is derived from gestural movements. The sign, he suggests, was originally a designation. The instinctual mechanisms of grasping, reaching out to hold or to take are original mechanisms of appropriation. Interestingly they are also one of the earliest reflex actions of infancy and have developed psychological significance as maternal care has grown to make them less biologically necessary for human survival.

The reflex of grasping, when inhibited, becomes an abortive gesture which thus designates instead of appropriating. The gesture takes the place of the action and thus becomes a linguistic sign.

In Girard's theory, unlike Freud's Totem and Taboo, there is no hypothesis of the father as designated victim, nor of devouring the victim, but rather the suggestion that the association between touching the dead scapegoat, (i.e. designating the object of the first non-instinctive attention), transmutes of the grasping reflex (associated with food as well as maternal proximity and security) into gesture, forming a matrix of interconnected meanings, through memory traces, in the rudimentary psyche of the hominid-human being.

Gans' theory is a formal theory, which puts forward a set of hypotheses about the development of syntactic, grammatical language, from the basis of the representation in general which preceded and which may still, psychologically, underlie it. Gans' conclusion is in many ways very similar to Badcock's view of language as misinformation:

Ultimately we do not deal with signs because they are more convenient than their referents, nor even because their reproducibility prevents conflict, but because they reproduce mimetic conflict in a domain of diminished violence. (20)

It was suggested in the previous chapter that in Isakower's concept of the auditory sphere - superego, "It is not the content of language which is characteristic of the superego but almost exclusively the tone and shape of a well-organised grammatical structure". And it was

suggested that Isakower's theory can be connected to Chomsky's more recent theory of syntax as deep structure. The role of syntactic deferral of meaning, and the articulation of units into structured unities might, plausibly, be closely linked with the psychological mechanism for the redeployment of aggression. Ward (1979) suggested that certain aspects of syntax and humour are best explained in terms of superego functions and instinctual aggression. (21)

Mothers, infants and paedomorphosis

It seems that the debates and disagreements on the origin of language particularly the differences between the groups here characterised as "homo loquens" and "homo symbolicans" theorists, will not be immediately resolved. Concluding the Colloquium on the Origins and Evolution of Language and Speech in New York, 1976, Fox remarked:

In some areas the difference between theories is quite extraordinary, so that, for example, the origins of language have been placed either with the early Australopithecines or in the Upper Pleistocene
(22)

However, one extremely significant divergence of views could be noted here. There are those who, like Gans, Diamond and Montagu, explicitly or implicitly attribute early language learning and usage to adult (usually male) members of the hominid group, in their work, toolmaking or hunting activities. Then there are those who have underlined the importance of the ontogenetic origins of language and learning: Marshack, Lenneberg, Tanner.

Marshack notes:

If language was to be learned, it would not have been in the context of the hunt, (a point made also, forcefully, by Tanner). It would have been learned young and before the individual was economically productive. It would have been learned in the context of the maturing generalised cognitive capacity and within a child's widening increasingly complex relational competence. (23)

Before exploring the most important, and probably the most troublesome concept here - the relation between phylogeny and ontogeny, we shall state the phylogenetic case as it has been reconstructed from the archaeological record. Both the linguistic and the anthropological

accounts of language origins use archaeological data to ascribe a historical context. Isaac (1974), Montagu, Marshack and Jaynes (1976) identified a rapid acceleration of both physical and cultural changes in the mid-Paleolithic period. Jaynes' data is the most inclusive, citing the 100,000 year transition from Acheulian (Lower Paleolithic) to Neolithic periods as the time of the acceleration which would seem to indicate the emergence of language. Marshack narrows the range to the Upper Paleolithic 30,000 year Aurignacian and Magdalanian periods. Isaac suggests that the somatic and social transformations of the earlier Pliocene and Lower Pleistocene periods (such as walking upright, toolmaking, hunting/gathering and food-sharing) evolving slowly over some two million years, set up the necessary conditions for the very rapid changes of the Mid-Upper Pleistocene 100-150,000 years ago. From the time of the Upper Paleolithic onwards, "the record gives the appearance of a threshold having been crossed", with more complex and more symbol-ridden systems of culture". Oakley (1951) was the first to suggest that developments in language may provide the best explanation of the cultural spurt of the Upper Paleolithic. All given contemporary sources consider this a plausible hypothesis, it does not contradict the historical dating suggested by Lenneberg, Liebermann or Tanner.

There have been many attempts to correlate the phylogenetic record with contemporary ontogenesis, the most important are the nineteenth century recapitulationist theories and the twentieth century inverse or neo-

recapitulationism known as neoteny or paedomorphism.

The theory of recapitulation has a long history in biological sciences, as Gould documents in his Phylogeny and Ontogeny, and its influence on psychoanalysis has been well documented by Sulloway (1979). A very brief account of the principal differences between the formulations of the 'law' as these changed over the last century will be given here. In its earliest form, as the Meckel-Serres (1808) law of parallelism, it states that a higher animal, in its embryological development, recapitulates the adult structures of animals below it on a "scale of beings". Apart from being based on a mistaken notion of the relation between species, in this form the law is not necessarily an evolutionary theory. By 1812 Cuvier's classification of species has undermined the idea of a single "scale of beings" and thus provided the impetus for an embryological exploration of recapitulation within classes of species, and the comparison between them. The science of embryology founded by Von Baer in the 1820s provided data which led to the refutation of the Meckel-Serres formulation; in 1828 Von Baer stated "the embryo of the vertebrate animal is from the very first a vertebrate animal and at no time agrees with an invertebrate animal". Contemporary embryologists consider that Von Baer's four laws of embryo development are still valid today, even though Von Baer was sceptical about evolution and did not elaborate his theory in this direction. It was Darwin who, in 1859, proposed the link between ontogeny and phylogeny within an explicitly evolutionary theory: "In two groups of animals

(however much they may at present differ from one another in structure and habits) if they pass through the same or similar embryonic stages we may feel assured that they have both descended from the same or nearly similar parents, and are therefore in that degree closely related. Thus community in embryonic structure reveals community of descent." Following this, In 1864, von Muller's tract Fur Darwin was the first attempt to describe the process of embryonic recapitulation of ancestry, and his ideas influenced Haeckel who formulated his well known biogenetic law in 1866 in The General Morphology of Organisms. Haeckel's was a reworking of the Meckel-Serres law as modified by intervening knowledge; it stated that the ontogeny of an organism recapitulates its evolutionary history, within the terms of the phylogeny of that species. Thus for example the gastrulation stage of cellular development shortly following conception, in which the spherical layer of rapidly multiplying cells begins to invert itself to form a sac-like structure of two layers with an opening at one end, is the formation of the first 'organ' of the foetus (eventually the stomach and the mouth) and also represents a crucial turning point in the evolution of higher animal life (with some marine organisms remaining at this stage). Although unable to specify the process through which this retention of ancestral forms are manifested in foetal development, and unable to suggest (as has been done most recently in 1982), that "the ties that bind ontogeny and phylogeny must not be studied animal by animal but rather organ by organ" (Delsol and Tintant),

Haeckel was nevertheless a firm evolutionist and proposed that phylogeny was the cause of ontogeny. Haeckel also incidentally formulated the first full critique of the doctrine of cerebral primacy.

In the twentieth century, De Beer's Embryos and Ancestors (1940, 1958) integrated the recapitulationist theory with modern biology, and produced the first theory of neoteny or paedomorphosis. More recently Gould has approached the issue from two perspectives, the history of ideas, and as a working theory for evolutionary biology. Gould notes that whereas the nineteenth century theories were predominantly accounts of metamorphosis (the idea of an anatomical development going beyond the ancestral forms), the evolutionary development of human beings is paedomorphic, retaining certain physical traits that are characteristic of the immature forms of ancestors.

The neo-recapitulationist theory of neoteny is the best explanation of the rapid change characteristic of human evolution. We noted the evidence from archaeology and language origins theorists of a particularly intense period of change in the Middle to Upper Paleolithic periods, which is often interpreted as marking the emergence of language use in man. An accelerated development growth such as this is best explained, biologically, by the theory of paedomorphosis. This form of evolution is particular to humans (although other primates show similar mechanisms), and requires minimal genetic action because the biochemical processes that control the rate and scale of foetal growth are relatively easily targeted through minimal genetic

change. Since major genetic change takes many breeding generations to take place (Dobzhansky, 1960) the processes of natural and sexual selection alone could not account for such rapid bio-cultural change. Paedomorphosis generates rapid changes in a small population (Gould, 1978, p.61), and the flexibility of rate of maturation (heterochrony) offers many ecological advantages.

The neoteny theory of evolution is fully compatible with the findings of molecular biology, and supports the psychoanalytic account of psychological development. Moreover it would seem to explain why Freud remained a Lamarckian despite his understanding of Darwin's refutation of the doctrine of acquired characteristics. Paedomorphic development would be the evolutionary mechanism which would allow for the psychological acquisition of culturally transmitted information and behaviour, with extended parental care providing the biological basis of the linguistic and psychological inner world.

Yazmajian was the first to correlate neotenic evolutionary theory with psychoanalytic theory:

Human intra-uterine foetal development and growth has an expanding spiralling quality which is characteristic of all mammalian forms of life. Neither marsupial nor placental mammals complete foetal development in utero; all mammals, including man and other primates, are born with persisting foetal traits, and must complete foetal development outside the uterus. Human extra-uterine foetal development extends over a period of about four to six years. (...) The last great spiralling sweep of the phylogenetic recapitulation occurs during this extrauterine period and follows the oral, anal, urogenetical progression outlined by Abraham. Further, this progression coincides with and influences the oral, anal and phallic infantile psychosexual stages as described psychoanalytically. The writer considers that Abraham's essentially philosophic comments about the

'parallels' between early embryo development and infantile sexuality reflect a literal truth. These observations are correlated with the broader concepts which Freud developed from the dual instinct theory. (24)

More recently, differences have arisen within psychoanalytic theory as to the usefulness of the genetic line of development (the theory of libidinal stages). The object relations school has focused more on the psychological capacities for dyadic relationships with internal and external objects, and this model is used alongside the more standard Freudian concept of infantile psycho-sexuality. Sandler, a 'standard' Freudian, has coined the phrase "the child within" to describe the effect of the dynamic unconscious, the repressed infantile development, on the behaviour of adults. Perhaps it is the resistance to unconscious knowledge, and to acceptance of the crucial significance of the infantile condition that has impeded scientific progress in this field, Gould notes that "A neotenic hypothesis of human origins has been available for some time, but it has been widely ignored and ridiculed. Nevertheless ... it is fundamentally correct." (25) Glover, discussing the resistance commonly found to the idea of infantile sexuality, and its unconscious existence in adults, was not hopeful: "I question whether man will ever take kindly to the view that he regulates his group affairs by laws which were originally fashioned in the jungle and are reaffirmed by every generation in the nursery." (26)

Comfort (1960) proposed an interesting vindication of the Freudian theory of sexuality from the point of view of

evolutionary theory: "infantile sexuality, and its corollary the Oedipus complex, has a basis in aspects of the bodily prematurity which characterises humans (and other primates) as different from other mammals ... it is not impossible that by necessitating repression and a mind divided actively into conscious and unconscious levels they produced the most significant adaptation in mammalian history, the emergence of conceptual thought and symbolisation." (27)

Two linguists have attempted to relate the ontogeny and phylogeny of language. Klein (1949) proposes a loosely recapitulationist model including gestural theories and phonological analysis of a range of contemporary languages. Lamendella (1976) constructs a strong argument for a 'neo-recapitulationist theory of the origins of language', which integrates neotenic evolutionism with recent theories of language acquisition in children (Ferguson and Slobin, 1973). He aims to show that recapitulation is present not only in physiological systems but also in cognitive and linguistic patterns of development. (28) The hypothesis of recapitulation is used to support the view that young children with so-called 'holophrastic' or one-word sentences do not thereby have the 'beginnings' of adult language but have their own system of meaning and communication; and that this is "a vestigial retention of prematurational stages of ancestral communication". An analogy is drawn between language acquisition and physiological processes, and Lamendella proposes also that crawling, for example, is not a first stage of walking or

running but "is in fact a modified recapitulation of an ancestral ontogenetic stage of cross-coordinated quadrupedal locomotion before the evolution of bipedal locomotion." (29)

The origins of writing

The differences between the vocal/acoustic and gestural/visual concepts of the origins of language described above indicate how varying discourses tend to inflect their objects and their terms of reference. The 'vocal' concept tends to find significance in the discontinuities between speech and other forms of communication, whereas the 'gestural' conceptualisation tends to establish connections between presymbolic and symbolic systems of behaviour, including language as speech.

It would seem that Saussurean semiology, with its emphasis on the arbitrariness of the phonemic signifier, had tended to direct structuralists towards the first of these two conceptualisations of language. The first group tends to find discontinuities between presymbolic (natural) and symbolic (cultural) behaviours, which is directly reflected in Levi-Strauss' comment that language must have been born "in one fell swoop". Levi-Strauss' concept of the symbolic has been described above, and the influence of this concept on Lacan's theory of subjectivity is well documented in secondary sources. (30) As the realm of signification, of the Law, and of prohibition, the Symbolic has been linked, by Lacan, to the realm of auditory perception and the function of the voice. Freud also established a connection between the form of the superego and the auditory sphere, as Isakower has noted.

There would seem to be good reason to suggest that the emergence of language, on the evolutionary scale, was

inextricably bound up with the emergence, in the psyche, of the superego. This would hold true for both types of conceptualisations of language. If this were the case, it would also be necessary to speculate that this psychic transformation was reflected in changes in the social organisation of the human primates, entailing the internalisation of aggression through symbolisation, and the controlled, repeated, externalisation of aggression through the type of ritual violence suggested by Freud, Girard and Gans. The second part of this hypothesis has been discussed in Chapter 3 above and is not of direct significance here. The first part is directly relevant to the discussion of the origins of writing and speculation on the significance of different types of signifier. That the signifier is a fact that is simultaneously 'natural' and 'cultural', gives meaning to the otherwise empty term "human nature". Durkheim's research into the signifier as a social fact provided the foundations of the structuralist edifice, which attribute, to the signifier, a central place in determining the reality and the meaning of sexual difference. I have argued that the three decades of theorising the place of sexual difference in human nature and society have greatly overemphasised the importance of the signifier. The bias towards social determinist theories of sexual difference in society has been maintained by the creation of its imaginary adversaries, "biological reductionism", "essentialism" and "psychologism". Not only have social determinists negated a broad range of theories and objects, but they have tended

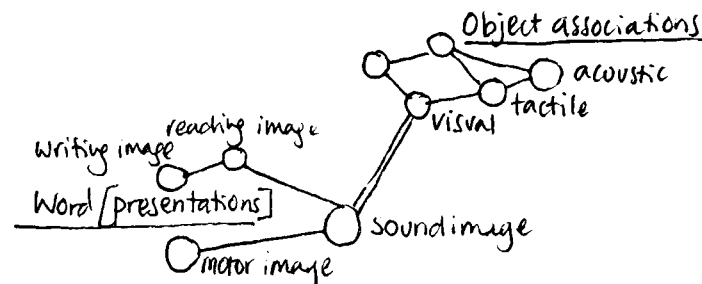
to produce theories which are extremely conservative, even misogynist. The Lacanian concept of the phallus as primary signifier of difference has been widely used by many feminisms, and is both essentialist and misogynistic. It is also, as I hope to demonstrate with historical case studies, inaccurate and misleading.

The Lacanian concept refers to the status of the signifier in the unconscious, for which there is little direct empirical evidence. Most theories of representation in the unconscious establish its specificity vis-a-vis conscious language through theoretical speculation and through analysis of manifest signification. Freud's speculation dating from the earliest work, On Aphasia (1891), is based on the theory of the first topography - the division of the psyche into systems Conscious, Preconscious and Unconscious. According to this topography, the Unconscious is differentiated from the other two levels, and each level has its own psychic function, its own type of signifying process (primary process or secondary process), its own type of signifying process (primary process or secondary process), its own type of energy (bound or unbound), and its own ideational content. These three levels are separated by barriers of censorship, more or less permeable. The least permeable is the barrier between the 'Systems Unconscious' and the other two levels, making the unconscious a qualitatively different form of psychic process and content.

The conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of the world belonging to it, while the unconscious

presentation is the presentation of the thing alone. The system unconscious contains the thing - cathexes of the objects, the first and true object cathexes; the system Preconscious comes about by this thing-presentation being hypercathected through being linked with the word-presentations corresponding to it. (31)

The diagrammatic form Freud gives to this formulation is:



The signifier in the unconscious, according to Lacan, is primarily visual, it is the imago. But its materiality is less important than its path of displacement along the two axes of the primary process, the metaphoric and metonymic pathways. In the textual analysis of the three pictographic prehistoric scripts it seems that the representation of sexual difference follows different symbolic pathways with masculinity and femininity through metaphoric association. Two of the three scripts have a signifier of the phallus and although these predate classical antiquity (which is the historical origin that Lacan attributes to the significance of the phallus), these three scripts reveal some logic of gender classification, which includes the phallus as one term of difference.

In selecting prehistoric 'transitional' scripts for textual analysis, some reference needs to be made to the history of writing. Derrida recommends that a history of

writing needs to be researched in order to challenge the "phonologism" of Saussurean linguistics, and suggests that a 'psychoanalysis graphology' might be an integral part of such a history (Derrida, 1978, p.231). Certainly, some historical, empirical, context needs to be added to the textual analysis in order to substantiate interpretations. The history of writing has, at present, no unified theory or frame of reference. It is a variegated set of discourses, primarily archaeological records, centring around two strands; epigraphy, the study of inscriptions on hard materials such as clay and stone, and paleography, the history of ink on paper.

The theoretical framework used in this study derives from the evolutionary paradigm which has been gradually elaborated in the previous chapters, and in the discussion of the origin of language. Within this paradigm it is possible to correlate the theories and methods of linguistics, anthropology and psychoanalysis. From this paradigm it is possible to challenge the idealist orthodoxies of cerebral primacy and to show how the related processes of pedomorphosis (extended dependency in young) and neoteny (the evolutionary influence of the species through foetal growth rates) are the basis of the most significant characteristics including language. It is also reasonable to claim that the immense significance of prematurity at birth and of extended helplessness during childhood has been overlooked in most pre-feminist theories of origins. The fact the human infancy has been considered unimportant in constructing the history of human adults is

probably due to the same causes as the fact that the human unconscious is consistently ignored, denied or overlooked in most historical theories of adults and their institutions.

The evolutionary paradigm does more than provide substantiation of the interpretations arising from the 'psychoanalysis graphology'. It can ascribe a fairly precise date to the evolutionary emergence of language and writing. The earliest evidence of ritual burial dates from 500,000 years ago, and there is good reason for considering burial itself to be a form of symbolic behaviour, indicating a recognition of death and thus a psychological or at least emotional response to death. Written representation necessarily carries the significance of a permanent record. However the earliest evidence of visual representation, in maps, symbols and ritual mark-making is attributed to 250,000 years ago, in the Upper Paleolithic age, and the marks are considered to have had a ritualistic or magical function rather than a denotative one. The earliest denotative, historical symbolism emerged some 5,000 to 4,000 years ago, bringing with it the transition to historical society: "With the invention of writing, and societies documented by the written word, and a surviving material culture." (32)

The earliest records of historical notation are from Sumeria, 3,000 to 2,000 years BC and have survived well due to the cuneiform script imprinted into clay tablets. The Ancient Egyptian and Chinese scripts are known as 'transitional' scripts, marking the transition between

purely pictorial representation and purely phonemic or alphabetic representation. In terms of semiotics, these scripts are ideographic, combining aspects of iconic, indexical and symbolic reference. Diringer (1948) notes that each of these three earliest transitional scripts was invented independently from the others, and that a number of these pre-alphabetic languages flourished and became extinct before the invention and dissemination of the alphabet. It seems that alphabetic, phonemic, writing was invented "in one fell swoop", spreading through cultural diffusion across all Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cultures, and throughout the world.

A comparison of the three ideographic, pre-alphabetic scripts is an integral aspect of the history of writing. It can also raise useful questions for a contemporary theory of signification. The relation between linguistic and pre-linguistic aspects of representation remains one of the most paradoxical questions of semiotics, and this question is of especial importance to understanding the symbolic construction of gender difference. Without reducing the historical epoch of the pre-linguistic to the synchronic concept of the pre-linguistic, some useful comparisons can be made between those different forms of representation. Furthermore, each of the three transitional scripts includes the terms of sexual difference as a central structure within its lexicon.













































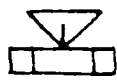





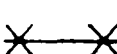

The representation of sexual difference in three pre-symbolic scripts (33)

1 Sumerian (Early Cuneiform) writing (Figure 1)



Cuneiform writing consists of imprinting triangular marks on clay tablets with appropriate stick tools, this version is an early form with some pictographic elements within a largely ideographic system.

It is immediately apparent that the representation of the sexes results from some form of classification which also contains reference to status difference. The sign denoting 'woman' is also, pictographically and conventionally, the sign for her sexual organs. The sign for 'man' is separate from the sign for his body parts (head, mouth) and penis, and a different sign exists for a man of royal status, the prince. A female slave and a female of royal status, however, are designated by the same pictographic unit for female (pudenda) in conjunction with an additional picteme (cloth, mountain); and the sign for a male servant uses the picteme 'penis' rather than the picteme 'man'. This complicated system of classification and 'naming' has, partly, to be explained with reference to the historical context of Ancient Mesopotamia, where the process of urbanisation, starting around 5,500 BC, created a polarisation of the population into city and country communities, with the urban centres assuming power in political hierarchy. The concept of 'mountain' or 'from the country' would serve to connote this political difference between urban and rural communities. However the logical classification of gender difference would seem




Fig.1. Diringer, (1948) p.21.

Picture-symbols of early Cuneiform writing									
Representations of objects mostly recognizable									
									
dagger, lancet, razor	palm tree	parts of the universe, regions	water	field	well, cistern	fabric, cloth, dress	bread, food	hill	
									
head	hand	mouth	penis	eye	belly, heart, interior	prince	day		
Pars pro toto									
									
man	pig	boar	ox	ass	singer	dog	pudendum, woman		
Determinatives preceding the main symbol									
									
divinity	stars	months	reeds or things made from reeds	towns					
Determinatives following the main symbol									
									
	birds	vegetables							
Distinction marks									
									
negation	to kill	secret	to write	furious	milk	meal	swamp	water conduit, canal	turban, head-dress
Compounds of two or more signs									
									
to eat	slave girl	lady, princess	servant (male)						
Compounds of two or more identical signs									
									
to double, to multiply	to add	hero	branch, to ramify	to approach	mountain				

to correspond to Lacan's conceptualisation of the absence of signification of woman in the unconscious: MALE : FEMALE :: HUMAN : SEXUALITY, the 'castration' of woman would be signified by her representation as being reduced to her sexual organ. The absence of the representation of sexual difference in the unconscious being inverted, on the level of consciousness to be nothing but sexual difference. The relational equation could also be expressed as MALE : PENIS :: FEMALE : SELF. The coupling of male and female is represented as an aspect of femininity itself, and whereas the feminine remains identified as the site of the body, and sexuality, the man is an entity who 'transcends' (in De Beauvoir's vocabulary) the immanence of the body, and enters the realm of abstracted difference, the social realm. Meanwhile, woman, representing lack, remains undifferentiated from the body so signifying only through and because of her sexual difference. That this logical classification exists as part of a power hierarchy is evident in the representation of social class, the sexual-bodily meaning is the debased meaning (male servant = 'penis from the mountain') and a woman's sexual status is present in the representation of both slave and princess.

But there are some complications in this classificatory system which inflect, and to some extent alter the meanings of male and female, and which show the influence of 'pre-Oedipal' meanings on the logic of castration. For example, the sign for woman/pudendum  is a close visual homonym for the sign for bread/food , indicating an association between nurturance and femininity. This associative chain

leads us to the sign for belly, which is the synonym for both heart and interior; and this sign is one of the only abstract concepts represented in the iconic system. It is a visual sign for something of which we have no visual experience, its meaning is entirely metaphoric, and in this way comes close to being a symbol, with a purely arbitrary and conventional signification. There are two associative axes, the metonymic chain in which masculinity is represented through the relation (visual and logical) of 'part' to 'whole'; and the metaphoric chain through which femininity is associated with food, belly, heart (love), and interiority (feelings, sensations?). 'Interiority' may also refer to the female sexual organ, vagina, as internal and 'hidden' as compared to the male organ.

A second set of meanings which is significant here concerns the duplication of identical signs. The most elementary repetition refers to counting, numbers and numerical concepts such as time passing. || to double, or multiply, and the anthropomorphic origin of numerical concepts is evident in the sign for addition  which connotes human procreation. More interesting still is the repetition of the sign  prince, to form the sign 'hero' . We could speculate as to why it should be necessary to have two separate concepts for ideals, when royalty acts as an unconscious symbol for an ideal or parent imago. What is the significance of the difference and of the doubling? Girard and Gans have noted the strong human capacity for mimesis, Freud and Roheim recognised the motif of the double, mirror image, twin, rival, imaginary friend,

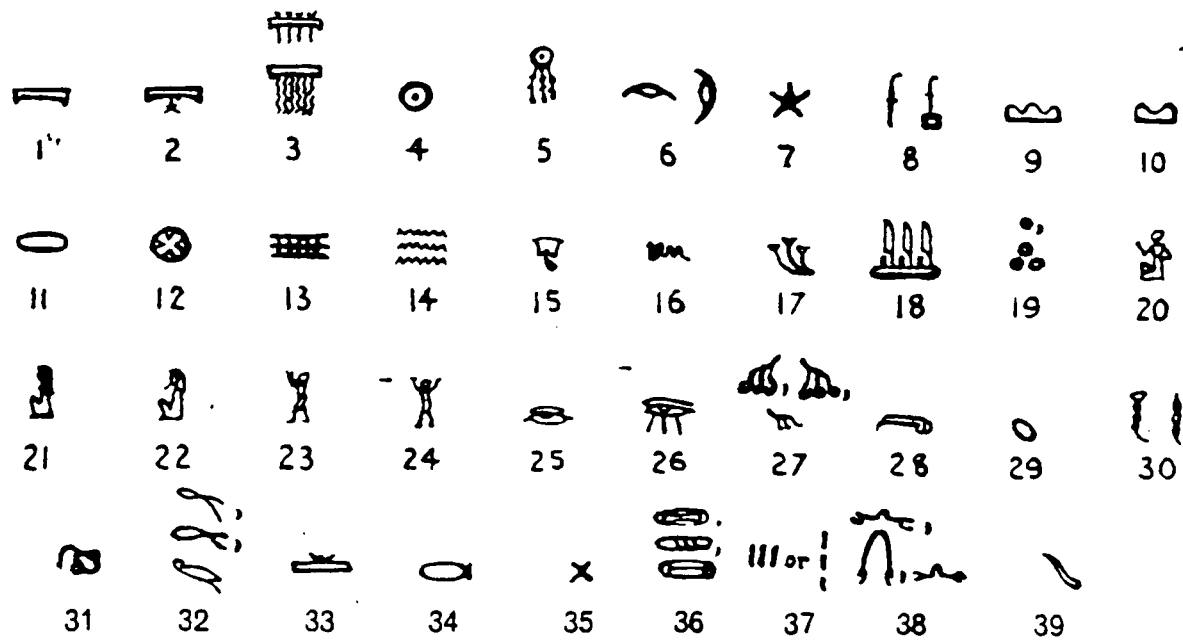
shadow or 'doppelganger', as a transcultural and transhistorical theme. Girard notes that twins are often used, in some societies, as either sacrificial victims or as sacred deities; possibly because twins are a biological aberration in human reproduction or more likely because the concept of twin defies the laws of classification through binary opposition and thus becomes taboo. Psychologically, the idea of the double as visually experienced relation (more than the echo for instance) evokes deeply ambivalent feelings characteristic of the earliest infantile dependence, and dealt with through the most primitive defences of splitting and projection. The desire for union with the other is represented as blissful, and this imaginary return to infantile omnipotence underlies many of our ideas of the sublime as a religious force, and of love. But the merging of two into one is also an extremely frightening idea because of the primal aggression which is evoked by the double. Fusion means death, annihilation, and the rival must be fought unto death; Girard sees in this the mimetic rivalry and violence of the species, Lacan and Freud a more psychological notion of the aggressive drive. In the Sumerian script it seems that the hero is a representation of the process of identification itself, the experience undergone by the unconscious of the reading subject as his ego is interpellated through the circuit of signification set up by the text. The reader is temporarily reunited, through primary identification, with another's interior world exteriorised in the text, and the reading self loses his difference and isolation. That an

exterior signifier is the necessary catalyst of this psychological process has been argued by Lacan in The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I (1949), which would support his view that identification is so structured for the human subject that "the signifier represents the subject for another signifier". Freud has also noted that doubling is used, in the dreamwork, as a defence against the idea of castration ("This invention of the doubling as a preservation against extinction has its counterpart in the language of dreams, which is fond of representing castration by a doubling or multiplication of a genital symbol" SE XVII, p.235). Yet, as we have seen, the theme of the double also refers back to the primacy of the physical and psychological to the mother, the ideal ego of the Imaginary being a projection, forwards, of a memory of primary narcissism; a stage at which the infant was omnipotently suspended in the mother's "primary material preoccupation".

2 Ancient Egyptian script (Figure 2)





This is again a transitional script, between the pictographic signs of the earlier systems and the fully phonetic hieroglyphic scripts of the Egyptian New Kingdoms (1,500 BC). The ideographic system does seem to contain some evidence of a form of binary classification operating in its semantic structure, and the later Egyptian vocabulary did contain words of antithetical meaning as noted in Abel's philological essay (18a). How then is sexual difference encoded within this system? The signs

Fig.2. Diringer, (1948) p. 40.



2.4. Hieroglyphic determinatives.

1. Heaven, Sky, Ceiling, what is above. 2. Night sky with a star hanging like a lamp from it, darkness, night. 3. (above) Sky slipping down over its four supports, storm, hurricane; (below) rain or dew falling from the sky. 4. Sun, the sun-god Ra, day period, time in general. 5. Shine, rise (of a luminary), being of light. 6. Moon, month. 7. Star, morning star, hour, time for prayer, pray. 8. Flourish, blooming, year, time in general, last year of a King's reign. 9. Foreign country, desert. 10. Mountain. 11. Island. 12. City, town. 13. Nome, District. 14. Water, watery mass of the sky. 15. Skin, hide. 16. Worm. 17. Plant, vegetable, herb, dried up. 18. Field, garden. 19. Grain, corn. 20. Man, first person sing. 21. Woman, first and second person sing. 22. God or divine person. 23. Pray, worship, adore, entreat, praise. 24. High, lofty, exalt, make merry. 25. To see. 26. To weep, tear, grief. 27. Hair (of men and animals), bald, lack, want, lacuna (in manuscripts), colour, complexion. 28. Phallus, front, male, masculine, procreate. 29. Women, goddesses, cities. 30. Sweet, pleasant. 31. Incense. 32. Roll of papyrus, tie up, bind together, come to an end. 33. Roll of papyrus (tied round the middle), book, deed, document, register, group together, abstract ideas. 34. Oval round a royal name, known as *cartouche*. 35. Pair of tallies, count, tally, reckon, pass by, depart. 36. Bread, cake. 37. Sign of the plural. 38. Negation, no, not, nothing, lack, want, need. 39. Horn.



 and  denote man and woman and carry the additional meaning 'first person' and 'first and second person'. Thus the semantic unit 'man' is also the grammatical category 'first person singular', whereas woman also signifies a plurality of voices, or at least an 'I' and 'You', an intersubjectivity or possibly an intrasubjective relationship. As in the Sumerian script, an associative axis of visual resemblance connects the sign for woman and the sign for 'God or divine person', and woman bears a closer resemblance to the latter sign than to the supposed complement of 'man'. Once again there is a division of labour which hinges on the opposition active-passive for the actions of praying, worship and entreaty are denoted by the male figure, and the female form is associated with the object of this action, the divinity towards whom this religious activity is directed. (Egyptian deities of this epoch were mostly male-animal hybrids, so it is not their explicit content or identity that is female, but their meaning). The connection between divinity and femininity is also made in signs (28) and (29);  signifies 'phallus, front, male, masculine, procreate', and the small oval  signifies 'woman, goddesses and cities'. In a larger form the oval becomes a cartouche (34), which was used to encircle a name to indicate royalty. Royalty and divinity were similarly linked for the Ancient Egyptians. A striking similarity with the Sumerian script is the metonymic and iconic axis of meaning which connects the meanings around masculinity and the metaphoric, symbolic axis around which femininity is signified. The ovum used


to denote 'woman, goddesses, cities' is not an iconic equivalent to the penis (the human ovum was not discovered until the late nineteenth century, by the embryologist Louis Bolk) but at most an indexical sign, possibly denoting eggs or grain of other species or the concept of the vagina as encircling the penis. It is more likely that it is purely symbolic, referring to unconscious meanings of a home, mother, the concept of a 'container'. In contrast, the sign of the male is the erect and ejaculating penis or phallus, an iconic sign derived metonymically from the male body. Male thus means single, unitary (first person), frontal, phallic, procreative and active. Female means a pair (first and second person, plurality), and carries more abstract and metaphoric meanings of divinity and of domicile.

This too accords with the Freudian hypothesis that it is the femininity of each sex which succumbs to repression in the resolution of the Oedipus complex, with masculinity and the male sexual organ having the function of signifying sexual difference. This would also confirm the Lacanian hypothesis that it is the phallus as signifier rather than organ which structures the primal repression, and that this Oedipal repression is structured like a metaphoric substitution.

A further series of relations of equivalence could be noted here, first person : first and second persons :: human : divine being
man : human :: woman : divine being
furthermore, femininity is closely associated with writing

through the metaphoric associations of the ideograms for 'cartouche' (34) Roll of papyrus, which also denotes tying up, binding together, and a conclusion (32) and the symbol (33) for document, to 'group together' or categorise, and abstract ideas. The visual resemblance of these signs can be understood as deriving from the belief, held by the Ancient Egyptians that their hieroglyphs were a divine gift (Derrida, 1978, P.208) and Fillmore, 1976, p.20) and that the act of writing held religious meaning until the script became increasingly cursive and was transformed into a demotic rather than hieratic writing (Diringer, p.114).

A striking, but obscure, series of relationships exists between the representation of 'lack, or negation' and the representation of hair. A comparison of signs (27)  and (38)  shows that the concepts of hair and of lack are related in some way. Also the ideogram for 'hair' also can mean 'bald', another example of antithetical meaning in Ancient Egyptian language noted by Abel. This curiously polysemic sign carries the additional meanings of colour, complexion, perhaps referring indexically to the facial characteristics accompanying the hair or hairlessness of a man, and the more abstract meanings of 'lack, want, and lacunae in manuscripts'. This particular sign exists as an iconic, indexical and symbolic sign, and each level of its signification seems to carry quite distinct meanings. A more stylised version of this sign (38) carries the symbolic meaning alone, denoting a purely abstract concept 'negation' and also 'no, not, nothing, lack, want, need'. There seems to be little doubt that the concept of negation

is connected, in some way, to sexual difference, and this is true of the Egyptian script whilst not for the Sumerian script. The Sumerian sign for negation is simply iconic,  a line crossed out.

Why should hair become the signifier of lack, denoting its opposite as well as 'the hair of men and animals'? A psychoanalytic reading would stress the sexual significance of hair, as an unconscious symbol. A Lacanian reading might emphasise the significance of facial hair as a visual mark of sexual difference in sexually mature adults. Possibly the additional meanings of pubic hair, which both sexes have as adults, might serve as a representation of castration, and its denial. Lacan suggests that:

The phallus can only play its role as veiled, that is, as in itself the sign of the latency with which everything signifiable is struck as soon as it is raised to the function of signifier. The phallus is the signifier of this Aufhebung itself which is why it inaugurates by its own disappearance. This is why the demon of Αἰδώς (Scham, shame) in the ancient mysteries rises up exactly at the moment when the phallus is unveiled. (...) a condition of complementarity is produced by the signifier in the founding of the subject: which explains his Spaltung as well as the intervening movement through which this is effected. (34)

So the sign for phallus, although it denotes the penis in its Aufhebung (for both Egyptians and Sumerians), is not veiled and therefore signifies the function of the penis, procreation, whilst some other signifier must service to signify the lack and difference which would normally, unconsciously, be signified by the phallus. This function is represented by writing itself, the lines of the marks in signs (27) and (38) undergo a transformation from iconic to symbolic, and by the time they signify 'negation' the

traces come to represent the graphic marks made by the scribe, and the magic of symbolic representation itself. The religious function of writing has already been noted, and the psychological significance of this can also be read in signs (32) and (33), both of which denote a roll of papyrus, perhaps itself a 'veiled' body at a time when the meaning of writing was known to very few, and only priests at that (23). Sign (32) has additional meanings of 'tie up, and bind together', which accords with the idea of duality or the bringing together of two parts connoted by the sign for woman, but also means 'to come to an end'. This reference to ending, closure, perhaps narrative closure or grammatical closure, perhaps death or castration, is echoed in the following sign (33) by a reference to 'abstract ideas'. It has been suggested that the capacity to conceptualise narrative closure is predicated on Oedipal triangulation (Barthes, 1966, p.124) and is linked to the capacity to understand sentences. Certainly, symbolisation requires the capacity to recognise loss and negation, as Freud's analysis of the Fort-Da game has shown, but the loss and absence which is worked through in symbolisation (whether in the sign of the cotton reel, the repetitions, the phonemes, or in 'words') is not necessarily structured in finite articulations.

















































The transitional scripts of the Sumerians and Egyptians display some of the characteristics of our own linguistic structures, and thus confirm some of the Lacanian hypotheses on the centrality of systems of signification in the formation of a 'divided subject' and

in the categorisation of ideas into a logic of 'complementarity'. However, the status of these, mostly, pre-symbolic scripts as ideographic and pictographic systems of signification means that they do not accord with the Saussurean conceptualisation of the signifier, nor with a fully arbitrary and conventional linguistic system.

As the materiality of the signifier is of especial importance in presymbolic systems of signification our comparison of these transitional scripts must discuss this aspect of their meaning. The Sumerian writing is either inscribed with a sharp implement, or indented with pressure through a triangular shaped stick (cuneiform) onto soft clay, which once hardened becomes potentially permanent. Here the signifiers are materially absent, the impression of the stick into the soft clay leaves a negative imprint, an empty space. Also, of unconscious significance, the act of writing is penetrative and more or less forceful.

The Egyptians, inventing paper from the papyrus plant, pioneered the technique of layering ink or paint on flat light transportable sheets, although engraving, inscription and painting onto permanent surfaces was also common. The use of pigment on paper with brushes and pens gives signifiers of linear, threadlike, traces of one material superimposed upon another. The act of writing is less penetrative and perhaps more analogous to touch, a contact between surfaces: it is also closer to the purely symbolic form of writing in the relative immateriality of the signifier.

Fig. 3. Diringer, (1948), p. 79.

PICTOGRAMS							
MAN, ANIMALS, AND PARTS OF THE HUMAN BODY							
							
MAN	WOMAN	CHILD	MOUTH	NOSE	EYE	HAND	FOOT
							
HORSE	TIGER	DOG	ELEPHANT	DEER	SHEEP	SILKWORM	TORTOISE
NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL OBJECTS							
							
SUN	MOON	RAIN	LIGHTNING	MOUNTAIN	RIVER	GRAIN	WOOD
							
VASE	TRIPOD	BOW	ARROW	SILK	BOOK	ORACLE	OMEN
IDEOGRAMS							
							
FIGHTING (MAN AGAINST MAN)	PLOUGHING (MAN + PLOUGH)	HUNTING (WEAPON + ANIMAL)	SUCKLING (WOMAN NURSING CHILD)				
							
SUNSET (SUN + GRASSES)	BRIGHT (MOON + WINDOW)	WRITING BRUSH (HAND + BRUSH)	SCRIBE (HAND + OBJECT)				
							
		ABOVE	BELOW				
PICTOGRAM + PHONETIC ELEMENT							
							
BLACK HORSE (HORSE + li)	SACRIFICE (SPIRIT + ssu)	PREGNANCY (WOMAN + jen)	HUAN RIVER (RIVER + huan)				
HOMOPHONES							
							
(lai, 'WHEAT, FOR) lai "TO COME"		(feng, 'PHOENIX, FOR) feng "WIND"					

6.6. Examples of Chinese pictograms, ideograms, pictograms combined with phonetic elements, and homophones.

Ancient Chinese transitional script (Figure three)

The Ancient Chinese used brush and ink on cloth and on pottery, combining the use of pictographic, ideographic and some phonetic elements. Even contemporary scripts retain some ideographic features, and the use of brush and ink, which reduces the separation between iconic and symbolic signification in Chinese culture.

In this script the representation of sexual difference is almost completely figurative and non-metaphoric. The pictogram for woman comprises the element for man with the addition of breasts and a kneeling position. The female function of mother is denoted transparently compared to the heavily encoded layers of maternal symbolism in the Egyptian script. A pictogram for child exists alongside the concepts of man and woman, again an almost figurative denotation of the characteristics of enlarged head and outstretched arms (the clinging impulse). The highly imagistic nature of this Chinese writing suggests that this script maintains the least amount of culturally directed division between conscious and unconscious signification. The images are the words and, rather than metaphoric substitution of new abstract signifiers for older visual-denotative signifiers, the phonetic script combines visual elements in ideograms of increasing complexity.

Diringer claims that these three transitional scripts were invented independently of one another, within 1,000 years of one another. The alphabet, on which all non-ideographic contemporary writing is based, was only invented once and then spread through cultural diffusion.

All Western scripts are based on the alphabet which started out as a North Semitic Hebrew alphabet in 1,100 BC, and which was used and amended by the Phoenicians, Aramaeans, Greeks, Etruscans and Romans in turn. From the invention of the alphabet writing has used arbitrary and conventional signs almost exclusively, and has been mostly cursive script, using ink on paper, until the invention of the printing press.

Some of the decodings we have made of the oriental and middle eastern scripts from 4,000 to 6,000 years ago are bound to be distorted through the ethnocentric biases of twentieth century European culture. Similarly the English language equivalents given by Diringer for the Sumerian and Egyptian concepts are bound to be approximate. But there are nevertheless some clearly marked and repeated motifs and themes in the representation of sexual difference and lexical classification.

Some Conclusions

There is nothing in the history and prehistory of speech which corresponds to Levi-Strauss' idea of a sudden transition into a world of meaning, although different theorists place more or less emphasis on the continuities between pre-symbolic and symbolic forms of communication and behaviour. However, if we consider the invention of the alphabet, language encoded into a visual system recording, with greater or lesser permanence, the conventional and arbitrary signifiers of phonetic system, then Levi-Strauss' concept of a single and sudden transition corresponds to a historical truth. If the

sphere of the Symbolic, in structural terms, is not only the codes governing the production of meaning in the 'langue' of spoken language , and its analogues in cultural systems of classification, but also the writing of that language, the circuit between verbal, auditory and visual signifiers, then the Symbolic can be said to coincide with the end of prehistory and the beginning of history, with the invention of writing in Sumeria 4,000 years BC.

The questions uncovered by considering the history and origins of speech and language, from its probable invention in the Upper Paleolithic to the formalisations in the earliest pictographic and transitional scripts, a time span of some 40,000 years, are more complicated. This is a short time when measured in the phylogenetic scale, and as we have seen, the rapid changes undergone by the hominid-human population during this time have to be explained by mechanisms, like paedomorphosis, which combine genetic and extra-genetic transmission of instinct and behaviour. This interface is the object traditionally studied by the social sciences, humanities and psychology, and yet this time scale is much wider than that used in the traditional social sciences. Using a psychoanalytic model we can suggest, without contention, that during these 40,000 years of the transition to genus homo, and homo sapiens (or, as we described above, as Homo symbolicans) a material culture based on tool-making, symbol-using and changes in ecological environment, co-evolved with the human psyche. The psyche and the symbolic material culture could be seen as the 'internal' and 'external' correlates of a long

phylogenetic, biological and social transformation.

What can the prehistory of language and writing tell us about the prelinguistic experiences and reality of ontogenetic development today? We have argued that a complex inverse 'recapitulationism' characterises the biological, anatomical and psychological relation between ontogeny and phylogeny. This is not to resurrect the incorrect and cliched concept of prehistory as the 'infancy' of mankind, but to suggest that there is a way in which infancy is the history of mankind.

The human capacity for culture, language, symbolisation and its internal corollary, the psyche as structured by the dynamic unconscious, and the agencies of id, ego and superego, is a biologically given capacity for potential change and adaptation. This view is most strongly supported by both archaeological evidence and by evolutionary theory. It is a formulation also arrived at from a different route, by psychoanalysis, using evidence from paediatric medicine and observations of children. As Winnicott has put it:

Cultural experience is differentiated from psychic reality and external reality. It is neither inside nor outside. It is play (non-instinctual activity), it is neither 'me' nor 'not me' but, like a transitional object is a representation of the fusion between self and object. (...) it is 'potential space'. (35)

The relation of fusion between self and object has a special relation to sexual difference, and investigating the cultural representation of sexual difference we find a nearly universal contradiction between the idea of two sexes as complementary and a deep-rooted belief in their

non-complementarity. This contradiction could be said to be between what is known, possibly rationally and at least is said or professed, about women being equivalent to men as adults, workers, members of class, ethnic groups, institutions or nations, and what is felt to be true of women in general. It is a contradiction possibly between conscious thoughts and unconscious beliefs.

What I have characterised, rather schematically and narrowly, as the structuralist position in which the sociology and psychology of women is described in terms of Levi-Strauss, Lacan and the early Freud, the castration complex is understood as the lynchpin holding together the conscious and unconscious systems, or the Symbolic, Imaginary and Real spheres. A disorder of the articulation of these systems results in an inability to acknowledge the reality of sexual difference, resulting in the denials of some aspect of that reality as found in perversion, fetishism, neurosis and psychosis. More generally, as applied to the analysis of cultural systems, this theory explains that 'Woman' is feared, despised, avoided or punished because she carries the meaning, in the unconscious, of castration. This theory is based on the early Freudian theory of phallic monism, the view that psychological development in the pre-Oedipal stages is identical for both sexes, with neither girls nor boys having knowledge of the vagina until puberty.

Some non-standard psychoanalysts have proposed significant amendments to this theory, a theory that Freud himself was coming to doubt by the end of his life, and

have suggested that there is a different pre-Oedipal development in boys and girls. Horney, Klein, Jones and more recently Erikson have concluded that early female sexuality exists as a different structure, and that the psychic development of boys and girls differs in the pre-Oedipal as well as Oedipal phases, and that there are corresponding differences in the structure of the unconscious in adult men and women. Each includes the idea that there is some unconscious knowledge, through sensory experience, or innate knowledge, of the vagina of pre-pubertal girls, and that corresponding anxieties and defences exist in the ego structure of adult women. The vagina being internal and unseen is not represented in the external world of cultural experience. Klein states that a very early Oedipal wish, in both sexes, is the wish to bear and feed children, and that this wish in its repressed form is found in many aspects of adult activity. Horney starts from a feminist and culturalist analysis and builds her psychological hypotheses from her theoretical framework. Jones, oscillating between the standard and the Kleinian schools of thought, eventually gravitated towards a theory of innate psychological difference for which he was much criticised by the Lacanians. More recently Erikson's studies of children's play have shown that girls tend to play with and construct internal spaces, whilst boys actively explore external space; and a range of feminist debates has developed within this framework over the past ten years. All the theories mentioned above are incompatible with theories based on phallic monism, which

emphasise the importance of the castration complex, the intervention of the Symbolic into the Imaginary dyad, the function of language in structuring the psychological significance of sexual difference. In the three transitional scripts discussed above a broad range of meanings are associated with the concepts of male and female. Also the categories of sexual difference occupy different structural positions within the lexical systems themselves, in relation to the other significant aspects of the natural and social environment. Some of the meanings associated with the concept of woman centre on the body as the site of sexuality, or of a debased subjectivity, evident from the hierarchy within which the other signifying units are combined. Yet Sumerian culture seems to have been matrilineal with a number of female deities, and was certainly not the most patriarchal of societies. For the Egyptians woman signifies both 'fusion' and the sacred. The Chinese refer man and woman to the concept of the child, which is unusual in the lexical systems of transitional scripts. In all three cases the asymmetrical set of meanings, the relation of non-complementarity, invokes complex metaphoric chains linking femaleness to interiority, food, love, containment, intersubjectivity, multiplicity. We could interpret that 'woman' represents "the fusion of self and object" because of her biological and psychological function as mother. Yet the subjective experience is, emotionally, as violent at the "mimetic crisis" identified by Girard and Gans as the historical origin of symbolic behaviour in human groups.

Without rewriting the story of the primal parricide with female protagonists, it is plausible that 'woman' is the primal victim. As one of the most fundamental of psychic representations and as the object of much infantile aggression, 'woman' must have become one of the most violently ambivalent internal objects. Today, when women are victimised, as women, the process is quite specific to the nature of the contradiction between conscious thoughts and unconscious beliefs. The form taken by this particular cultural process, and similar processes involving scapegoating such as racism, is best understood in terms of the infantile predicament of protracted dependence. The infantile distress and helplessness, the internalisation of aggression through psychosocial agencies such as the superego, and the primitive defences of splitting, projection and denial are fundamental to structures and institutions of cultural abuse. The representation of the mother is the first object of violence, of guilt, and the mechanism of denial is the most common defence against knowledge of this aggression.

It has been suggested that the castration complex is a secondary reaction formation, a kind of denial of primary aggression, which serves to protect the immature ego from its own capacity for sadism, and from the recognition of the biological inadequacy of the Oedipal child (26). The most common form of oppression suffered by women is the covert sadism of disguised, denied and disowned unconscious aggression. As daughters, sisters, lovers, wives and mothers, women are scapegoated, by both sexes, as adults

repeat the infantile attacks on the imago of the body of the mother.

Feminism has struggled to theorise gender difference in terms other than anatomical difference of reproductive organs, as this seemed to mimic the logic of ideologies of sexism. Whilst there does seem to be some psychoanalytic evidence to support the view that anatomical difference has meaning, in the form of unconscious knowledge of the vagina in girls and equivalent forms of sexual identity in women, the most important biological basis of the psychical significance of sexual difference is the evolution of the difference between men and women in their social, economic, institutional structures and this has to be understood, not only in terms of the 'psychical consequences of the anatomical differences between the sexes' (Freud, 1925), but in terms of the vast differences between infant and adult. The differences which are manifested in the Oedipus complex and in pre-Oedipal subjectivity.

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Conclusion: the politics of representation

The most extreme forms of social oppression, such as genocide and political persecution, are no different in their fundamental structure, from the ideologies that inform the daily life of contemporary Britain. Just as pathology and normality exist on a continuum, so extreme oppression and the habits of everyday thinking share a fundamental structure. The main example I shall elaborate is to compare projection as a part of normal psychic functioning, and ordinary thinking, with the extreme forms of projection in ideology which have led to brutality and persecution. The concept of a continuum that exists between extreme forms and ordinary life is not uniquely Freudian. Althusser's synthesis of Marx's "structuralism" with Lacanian theory contends that there is a continuum between ordinary subjectivity and extreme forms of social exploitation. Althusser's theory, described in detail in chapter 1, needs to be reformulated if it is to utilize the insights produced by feminism and psychoanalysis. I have explored the possible uses of Althusser's concept of "omni-historical reality" in chapter 2 when considering the question of origins and the superego. The resulting combination of Marxist analysis, of class contradiction structuralist analysis of symbolic systems, and psychoanalysis of unconscious phantasy is offered in relation to historical examples of racism.

The specific reformulation proposed here concerns the thesis that ideology "interpellates individuals as

subjects". By historical analysis of the process by which this takes place, in relation to both genocide and milder, no less systematic, symbolic annihilation, "interpellation" can be redefined. Traditionally it has been the intersubjective and the linguistic aspects of interpellation that have been emphasized in explaining this process. Althusser gives the example of the subject "hailed" by the appellation, "Hey You!". However, the question of what it is that makes the listening subject respond to the call with the response of "Who, me?", remains obscure. I contend that the interpellating process is intersubjective and linguistic only in a secondary sense, since the condition for a response is primarily an intrapsychic structure. It is the superego of the listening subject that receives the appellation and directs it to the ego. The conflict between superego and ego, founded on unconscious guilt, is reflected in the intersubjective exchange of the interpellation. To summarise, we are interpellated as ideological subjects through unconscious guilt, it is the superego that hails "us". We have explored the theory concerning the interaction of aggression, syntax, language and the superego, in chapter 2.

What are the practical consequences of this reformulation of Althusser's thesis. Particularly, the concern of this thesis is to theorise the relation between knowledge, representation and sexual difference. How can this reformulation help to answer the initial question of the thesis: "Why is it so difficult to think about women?"

In the introduction it was suggested that the polarisation of unconscious and conscious knowledge, in the form of the opposition between intuition and reason cannot be useful. Often the overvaluation of reasoning is used to conceal a fundamental irrationality on another level of thinking. Intuition, based on the recognition of emotional facts, is the only method of discerning the operation of fundamental irrationalities, when these are concealed by superficial reasoning or systematisation. Psychoanalysis, since Freud, has noted the resemblances between the apparent orderliness of intellectual systems, such as philosophies, and the elegant, systematic, delusions of mental disorders such as paranoia. Paranoia projects its "chaos", an unconscious phantasy, into an external object and builds elaborate, over-rationalised systems of meaning in order to defend the self from the fear of the chaos. Intuition, although apparently less systematic than reasoning, is a necessary component of the production of a better understanding of sexual difference, and its cultural misrepresentations. Emotional truth has traditionally been thought of as part of female knowledge. This aspect of tradition, which has coined the term "feminine intuition", is a useful one. I suggest that when allied with the understanding of general scientific method, and psychoanalytic metapsychology, feminine intuition is an integral part of feminist theory and self-reflexive science. The association of the female form of knowledge with intuition derives largely from our predisposition, either biologically and psychologically, towards

recognising and responding to emotional needs and attachments. As linked with the work of mothering, women tend to try where possible to nurture or sustain emotional attachment. This side of reality is often more obscure to men, and is less valued by them. It has been suggested, in chapter one, that this devaluation of feminine forms of knowledge by men may be based on unconscious envy. Woman's capacity to be closely identified with her infant and to find, in this emotional interaction, a repetition of the lost attachment to the mother of childhood, often seems enviable to men who must accept the loss of the childhood mother as absolute.

The use of intuition in the clinical application of psychoanalysis is well documented in the substantial literature on the concept of countertransference. The consequences of recognition of intuitive thought for academic disciplines is more difficult to determine. We know that the discourses of academic subjects are not the products of reasoning alone. Institutional politics, State policy, funding, technological changes, and cultural forces influence the forms of educational practice. With Foucauldian theory and also with deconstructionist criticism in the 1970s and 1980s, the critique of the autonomy of academic subject areas and scientific method began to be formulated. Historical analysis of the origin and development of anthropology, has emphasised its basis in certain economic and political structures such as European imperialism and the colonial administration. The value of this type of historical analysis is

unquestionable; but these decades also produced an accompanying ideology which could be described as an attack on the concepts of "reality", "truth" and "science". As an attack, this ideology went well beyond the simple problematisation or questioning of the tacit assumptions of these concepts. It often started from the assumption that reality and truth should be thought of as effects of textual structure, and that science was the ideological product of a nineteenth century bourgeois culture. The more useful aspects of a questioning of authority led to the politics of transformation rather than transgression, and to a rethinking of the concept of identity as an important new field of political and theoretical investigation. It seems that these incentives towards critical questioning, despite their divergent forms - from counterculture, student politics, to textual analysis and theoretical practice, can be linked in so far as they represent a particular Oedipal configuration. One narrative theme common to many of these forms of radicalism was that of an attack on the concept of the father, and a common aim was the 'overthrow' of paternal law. This unconscious configuration can more easily be seen, with hindsight, in many of the practices of the preceding decade. (1)

It is useful to bear in mind this Oedipal structure of authority and authorship when examining the institutionalised boundaries between academic disciplines and sciences today. The boundaries between academic disciplines, and sciences, are partly real and partly

defensive. The objects of sciences do differ, as Francois Jacob has described, although they are not completely autonomous. Sometimes, when there is an increased degree of resemblance between the object of one discipline and another, the boundaries between the disciplines become defensively over-rationalised or over-regulated. Freud called this "secondary elaboration". We have seen that the defensive use of difference has been particularly evident in the relation between anthropology and psychoanalysis. To use an analogy from anthropology, the differences between academic disciplines can function like totemic thinking, each discipline having its own genealogy of founding fathers, authors, and authority, just as each totemic clan traces its genealogy upwards through its totem species. Whereas totemism sets up rules governing the interchange of marital partners, 'kinship' and exogamy, the academic clans are subject to rules governing the interchange of ideas and concepts from one discourse to another, a discipline's 'specificity'. The underlying unconscious phantasy may be similar in these two instances of controlled interchange, an unconscious phantasy of controlling the sexuality or fertility of the Oedipal parents. Similar defensive boundaries exist between Marxism and feminism, and indeed wherever feminist practice attempts to question masculine values in institutionalised knowledge. Feminism has repeatedly argued for, and demonstrated the reality of, the inseparability of subjective and objective forms of knowledge. This argument or insight has been unacceptable to most academic

institutions, as they are presently organised. Freud, although ultimately a rationalist, produced a science which outlined the obstacles in the path of reason. He recognised, named and explained the unconscious phantasies and thoughts that shape consciousness and our relation to reality. Psychoanalysis shows these unconscious thoughts and phantasies and the fact of human emotional attachment to be the legacy of human evolution, a product of paedomorphic evolution and our extended dependence during infancy. The resultant Oedipus complex is thus seen as the driving force behind human cultural and social achievement, or what Freud called "civilisation".

We have used this theory and have argued for its applicability to the cultural formation. We have also explored the limitations of Freud's theory of female subjectivity. The limitations of Freudian theory are identified as the misrecognition of the pre-Oedipal structures of subjectivity and the resulting misrecognition of the meaning of femininity. Lacanian theory is similarly criticised for its exclusive focus on the part played by language, the symbolic and the castration complex in forming subjectivity.

An alternative textual analysis of the symbolic representation of sexual difference is offered in chapter 3. The selection of three proto-historic scripts facilitates the comparison of different forms of the signifier, and supports a critique of the Freudian-Lacanian hypothesis of psychic phallic monism. The concept of the phallus as primary signifier of difference is criticised

from a historical perspective. The many meanings of female symbolism are discussed in terms of pre-Oedipal subjectivity. The work of Jones, Klein, Winnicott, Benedek and Horney on female sexuality is quoted, showing that some post-Freudians have focussed more on the dyadic structures preceding the Oedipus complex. The emphasis on the two person relationship that is transformed into the Oedipal triangle reveals the power of pre-Oedipal thoughts, feelings and phantasies in determining adult behaviour and identity, and in shaping many cultural and social forms.

In chapters 1 and 3 we examine the way in which this affects the perception, representation and social position of women. The prolonged dependence of infants on maternal care, experienced and remembered without the intermediary of language and symbolism, leaves a profound psychological, emotional and physical impact. The fact that women are universally treated in an irrational way ranging from thoughtlessness to extreme cruelty is evidence of the very great difficulty men and women have in fully recognising the fact of this early dependence on a woman. Winnicott's essay on the mother's contribution to society is used to explain this process, as is Klein and Riviere's study of men's envy of women in Hate, Greed and Aggression.

It was proposed, in the introduction, that when the social position of women is understood in the light of theories of early dependence the resultant politics of feminism will be inextricably interlinked with the politics of anti-racism. This connection can be demonstrated at the level of theoretical and historical analysis, when racism

is shown to have roots in the pre-Oedipal unconscious phantasies that also determine the representation of sexual difference. The economic roots of racist ideologies, in the colonial expansion of imperialist Europe well documented. The political basis of institutional racism, in law, policing, housing, employment, education, medical welfare and culture, is also becoming increasingly well documented and recognised (2). It is proposed that a theoretical understanding of the psychic defence mechanisms of "splitting" and "projection" confirms the intuitive understanding of racism of those who have been subject to it. The intuitive knowledge that one is being irrationally hated, or treated as an object of cultural danger, fear or contempt is supported and confirmed by psychoanalytic theory. We shall discuss the view of anti-semitism as a disturbance of the Oedipus complex as proposed by Wangh (3). Then Klein and Riviere's analysis of pre-Oedipal aggression is used to argue that racism works by projecting the experience of aggression onto the external concept of 'dirt'.

If we start with the distinction between real or imagined differences it must be recognised that the concept of race is not a scientific concept. 'Races' do not exist, in any biological sense. The categorisation of humans as a species includes the differentiation between a number of blood types, which can be differentiated absolutely, and a range of physical and ethnic variations which are not absolute categories.

The division of humans into races, as biologically distinct populations, was formally proposed by Linnaeus in the eighteenth century. The Enlightenment's rationalist attempts at producing a systematic classification of the living world led him to classify organism into species and sub-species, or 'genus' and 'type'. This taxonomy remained in use until the middle of the twentieth century when 'population' replaced 'type' as a concept and as a method of classification. Until then the genus homo was thought of as having several subspecies types such as Asiaticus, Afer, Americanus, etc. A species was defined as a breeding group, and this classification still holds true. But the Linnaean classification was conducted by meticulous visual observation of the outer appearance of every type of organism. Every visual clue was noted and features of species such as numbers of leaves, wings, limbs, size, shape and colouring were used to distinguish between the different types within species and, before Mendelian genetics introduced the study of chromosomes, visual clues were used to establish the difference between species. Much theoretical controversy existed, and still exists, over the question of how new species come into existence. Darwin overturned the religious doctrine of the immutability of species. But the taxonomy of Homo sapiens divided into subspecies and homo Asiaticus, Homo Afer and Homo Americanus maintained a hold on the scientific and popular imagination. Eventually certain technological and political advances changed scientific thinking. The political advances were those brought about by anti-racist

movements and the Civil Rights activists in the USA in the nineteen-sixties. The technological changes were those brought about by molecular genetics, enabling species to be compared through comparison of genetic information. Comparisons can be made of the 'closeness' or 'remoteness' of a species from any other, by identifying the exact historical time at which a species "branched off" from its ancestral population. In other words, in the history of science a historical method of comparing species has replaced a visual method. Although the genetic material is initially identified by being made visible under an electron microscope, the classification of genetic difference is not made in terms of a logic of visibility. This European tradition of the overvaluation of visual perception as an arbiter of reality and truth has been discussed in chapter 1. It was noted that the cultural equation of vision with knowledge, and the psychological association between vision and control have much in common. The consequences of this analogy have been discussed in so far as it has a structuring function in the representation of sexual difference. Visual dominance in the realm of sense data and knowledge is inextricably connected to the theory of phallic monism. Perhaps the overvaluation of visual perception is also an aspect of the phallic phase of psychic development. The way in which psychoanalysis explores this dynamic is of great use in understanding the unconscious roots of racism.

Something is projected onto the ethnic other through the stigmata of visible difference. Different aspects of

human subjectivity, disavowed and denied by a dominant culture are unacceptable to European narcissism and are ascribed to Asian others, African others, West Indian others, Semitic others, etc.

There are certain evident similarities between this form of projection and the "fear of WOMAN" described by Winnicott. Woman and the ethnic other could be said to be held in an analogous position within the system of the distribution of power through classifications of visible difference. Certainly, each category is subject to being identified with anatomical and especially sexual otherness. There are a number of studies of the representations circulating within European imperialist cultures which have noted the assimilation of sexuality to otherness. Where sexuality becomes unacceptable to the European ego it becomes projected onto every conceivable substitute for the id; the working-classes, women, 'races', especially the intermediary cultures of the Middle East, 'primitive' populations and their culture. Sander Gilman notes the repeated reduction of the exotic to the erotic in nineteenth century France:

(Zola) projects what is basically an internal fear, the fear of the loss of power, onto the world. The "white man's burden" thus becomes his sexuality and its control, and it is this which is transferred into the need to control the sexuality of the Other ... This need for control was a projection of inner fears: thus its articulation in visual images was in terms which described the polar opposite of the European male. (4)

Certainly the projection of sexuality, with a need to control the Other, is a fundamental part of racist ideology. Stuart Hall (5) has shown how sexual stereotypes

of black people as being "closer to the body" or nature are part of a language of racism. The envious attribution of a 'natural' sexual prowess, uninhibited by the demands of culture, to an ethnic Other is one aspect of a range of sexual fantasies. These include fantasies of seduction, possession, rape, all forms of involuntary sexual pleasure, expressing guilt over responsibility and control. Hohni Bahba (6) uses a Lacanian paradigm to show how the stereotype of the colonial Other carries the meaning of the 'castration' of the European, which must be controlled through repetition of the stereotype.

But unless we are to believe that the social control of sexuality is what causes guilt, we must ask what it is that causes sexuality to be unacceptable to the European ego, and to become its "burden". Also, the mechanism of projection should be more closely defined to show how projection of fear or guilt takes place.

Pontalis and Laplanche define projection as:

an operation whereby qualities, feelings, wishes or objects which the subject refuses to recognise or rejects in himself are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing. Projection, so understood, is a defence of a very primitive origin which may be seen at work especially in paranoia but also in "normal" modes of thought such as superstition. (7)

Accordingly, it is especially the 'bad' aspects of the self that tend to be projected externally through splitting and denial. In chapter 2 the projection of the "ego ideal" onto group leaders, was discussed. The type of projections at work in racist ideology are generally more negative. To account for why sexuality should be experienced as a

"burden" or as "dirt" it is necessary to explore the connection between sexuality and aggression. Some aspects of sexuality are experienced as bad because they reactivate memories of the infantile predicament of frustration, or, because any form of libidinal excitement may be a psychic trauma since it disrupts the homeostasis of the psychic economy, which the ego attempts to control. The 'pleasure principle' of psychic functioning, based on maintaining a constant level of tension in the organism, results in the fact that any sudden disruption of that constancy is experienced by the ego as a threat and is reacted to with aggression. It is not the sexuality itself which is experienced as 'bad' but the aggression accompanying any disruption of narcissistic homeostasis. Of course, the two processes are generally inextricable to some extent, especially because adult sexuality reactivates the partial drives of infantile sexuality. The first phase of diphasic sexuality carries with it the guilt of Oedipal wishes, the frustrated desire for the parent of the opposite sex and the equally frustrated aggressive wishes toward the parent of the same sex. Both the frustration and the aggression cause guilt.

In the sphere of applied psychoanalysis, as applied to social, political and cultural problems, the projection of sexuality has been more extensively discussed than the projection of aggression. This may be for two reasons; firstly because applied psychoanalysis has most recently been used by theorists of sexual difference and feminism. The second reason is that most political theories tend to

locate the "forces of power", and therefore its human correlate of aggression, in external institutions or conditions. Social determinism tends to conceptualise aggression and violence as a response to external frustration, such as social deprivation or provocation. Psychoanalytic theory locates aggression and the destructive impulse as an integral part of psychic structure; although within this theory there is significant disagreement about the internal causes of aggression. Linked to the difference of views over the relative merits of an "instinct" centred concept of the subject and the view of the subjects as "object related", the disagreements about aggression are based on different views of the role of instinctual drives.

Kleinian theory posits the existence of an autonomous, innate sadism which is expressed in the form of envy. Based on Abraham's view that: "psychoanalytic observation of children has established the fact that that set of instincts which aims at the destruction and expulsion of the object is ontogenetically the elder of the two", Klein's concept of aggression resumes Freud's theory of the "death instinct". Other schools of thought, such as that of Winnicott, conceive of aggression as a reaction to frustration or "disillusion", but emphasise the fact that since the loss of infantile omnipotence is an inevitable occurrence, that the aggressive response has an innate cause. Whatever the theoretical differences there is sufficient consensus within the psychoanalytic view to make its perspective significantly different from that of the

social determinist theories. We can therefore identify a specific contribution which can be made from this perspective. Because aggression is only rarely experienced for what it is, and is subject to a range of protective defence mechanisms, it is sometimes difficult to remember the strength of infantile rage from the point of view of adult logic and consciousness. Riviere offers a good description:

But what happens if his expectations are not fulfilled? In certain degree the baby becomes aware of his dependence; he discovers that he cannot supply all his own wants - and he cries and screams. He becomes aggressive. He automatically explodes, as it were, with hate and aggressive craving. If he feels emptiness and loneliness, an automatic reaction sets in which may soon become uncontrollable and overwhelming, an aggressive rage which brings pain and explosive, burning, suffocating, choking bodily sensations; and these in turn cause further feelings of lack, pain and apprehension. The baby cannot distinguish between 'me' and 'not me'; his sensations are his world, the world to him; so when he is cold, hungry or lonely, there is no milk, no well-being or pleasure in the world - the valuable things in life have vanished. And when he is tortured with desire or anger, with uncontrollable, suffocating screaming, and painful burning evacuations the whole of his world is one of suffering, it is scalded, torn and racked too. This situation which we all were in as babies has enormous psychological consequences for our lives. It is our first experience of something like death, a recognition of the non-existence of something, of an overwhelming loss, both in ourselves and in others as it seems. And this experience brings an awareness of love (in the form of desire), and a recognition of dependence (in the form of need) at the same moment as, and inextricably bound up with, feelings and uncontrollable sensations of pain and threatened destruction within and without (8).

The intensity of this experience exists, in the adult unconscious, in the form of a sense of burden, the weight of "heavy" feelings such as loss, and grief. The rage is remembered as the fear of loss of control, with the threat of catastrophic consequences of uncontrolled action. It

was noted, in the Introduction, that the expulsion of energy in the nervous system has a prototype in the organic structure of the intestinal canal, before development of the embryo differentiates between the intestinal canal and the neural canal. This connection between the organic and psychosexual worlds is especially evident in the mental representation of expulsion of aggression, and in the phantasies and symbolism of racism. Visual signs such as the dark skin of the negro or the dark hair of the Jew, are used by the racist, as representations of what is "dark within". This is the unconscious and particularly aggression. The unconscious is "dark" because it is forgotten and feared and associated with dreaming and night, aggression is "dark" because it is associated with expulsion through the intestinal canal and defecation. Grunberger has expressed a classic psychoanalytic interpretation when he classifies racism as a form of regression: "Xenophobia, prejudice, and ethnocentrism all have their roots in infantile behaviour, in the unconscious." (9) Grunberger notes that evidence of the unconscious at work can be found in the deeply contradictory nature of beliefs, since logic has no existence in the primary process. Therefore ideologies represent contradictory thoughts side by side: "The Negro is as sly and diabolical as he is credulous and naive, the Jew is at one and the same time ugly and seductive, hoards secret wealth and is given to ostentatious display." (10)

People on the receiving end of such contradictory representations are aware that they are being treated "like

shit" or treated "like dirt". This is a well known insight, expressed with great anger or bewildered hurt, by victims of social oppression or ideological misrepresentation. This intuitive insight is an exact description of the process at work, the unerring accuracy of the unconscious has identified the psychology of the oppressor. Moreover, other aspects of pre-Oedipal sexuality find expression in the contradictory beliefs and stereotypes of the ethnic other. Oral phantasies can be found in the fears that immigrant populations are devouring national resources, that they are inordinately greedy or needy, or dependent. Phallic imagery predominates in the projection of a castrated self-image, such as the despised woman or the degraded Jew or Negro. Anality predominates in fears of 'dirt', contamination. The need for excessive control, and in metaphors of indigenous populations being 'swamped' by the 'out-group'. What takes place at the level of the organism is superimposed, symbolically, onto the dynamic of groups.

Just as the ego splits itself into idealised and denigrated aspects, Adorno noted that groups tend to split into in-groups and out-groups, with everything good pertaining to the former and everything bad to the latter. Furthermore, Wanhg's analysis of the genocide of the Jews in Nazi Germany notes that:

The more projection takes place, the more debilitated become both the sense of reality and the sense of identity. An ever widening repudiation of that which belongs to the self brings about an ever increasing need to define the limits of the self in terms of that which is not-self, through a detailed delineation of the characteristics of the out group.

In consequence the ego knows less and less of its own feelings and desires, and supposedly more and more of the alien group. (11)

If this psychoanalytic critique of the social manifestation of unconscious anal sadism is to be of political and practical use it must be shown to be compatible with a historical analysis which could also account for the dynamic of class conflict and the action of cultural systems.

That is, the narrative structure of the acts of homo infantilis must be connected to the narrative of the other historical protagonists homo economicus and homo symbolicans. Here, a brief analysis of some of the complex factors that determined the form of Nazi antisemitism will be advanced. Class analysis accounts for the social basis of the electorate who voted the Nazi party to power, symbolic and cultural analysis reveals the ideological themes that dominated the imagery and representations within Nazi culture and propaganda, and psychoanalysis reveals the psychological roots of racism in regressive sadistic activities defending against fears of annihilation and against suicidal impulses.

Although in many European countries antisemitism had existed, periodically, since the Middle Ages there had been no expression so extreme as the surge of German antisemitism which followed the economic crisis of 1929, and which culminated in the genocide of six million Jews in concentration camps throughout the second world war.

Wangh notes that antisemitic organised politics, the politics of the National Socialist party, was largely the

activity of a young and lower middle class. He links the popularity of the Nazi party to the effect of the economic depression following the fall of the international stock market, which resulted in chronic unemployment for the working and middle classes throughout Europe. Whereas in Germany the working class had already developed a strong proletarian identity, with allegiances to scientific socialism, the lower middle classes reacted with an abrupt loss of class identity, facing permanent or long term unemployment without ever having been proletarian. These class conflicts are well documented also in the rise of Italian fascism and in the popular support of Moseley's Blackshirt movement in Britain. The demography is revealing: in 1930 the Nazi party won six million votes which made it the second largest political party in Germany, and between 1930 and 1933 about three million young people (six per cent of the electorate) reached voting age. The young people did not all vote Nazi immediately but by 1934 the party had won forty-five percent of the national vote. So the popularity of Nazi ideology was secured by a young and mainly lower-middle class population. Wagh investigates the distinguishing characteristics of this particular generation. Their early childhood had been spent in the years of the 1914-1918 war, when, from a population of 59 million, over eleven million men were mobilised to fight at the front. The German losses were colossal; over two million killed in action and over seven million severe casualties. In addition to this devastation of family life, the Allies'

blockade of Germany in 1917 caused a famine bringing the nation to a particularly humiliating defeat in the following year. The generation in question had thus experienced prolonged paternal absence in early childhood when their fathers were mobilised during the first world war, and during that absence the mothers and children were subject to acute economic deprivation, and sometimes starvation. Wagh notes that prolonged parental absence is invariably experienced, by children, as rejection, and that this causes lifelong feelings of unworthiness, loss of self-esteem and humiliation. In addition the fathers who did eventually return from the army were often disabled, and the humiliating conditions of the German national defeat were both factors which adversely affected this early physical and emotional damage. The traditional substitute for paternal protection, the State, had been unable to provide any sense of familial security to compensate. This generation with such an insecure early childhood was again at adolescence subjected to massive anxiety. When the collapse of the US stock market brought economic hardship and chronic unemployment throughout Europe. Once again, fathers were unable to provide for their families, and had to bear the demoralisation of long term unemployment. The young adults were also unable to find work and the fresh damage to self-esteem reactivated the earlier anxieties of childhood. Recalling Riviere's description of infantile rage at unmet needs it is possible to imagine the extent and depth of the anxiety in question, and when turned towards the ego it was a profoundly

suicidal force.

Throughout Europe, in the 1930s young people joined militaristic groups, with the group's esprit de corps providing a substitute form of leadership and an ego-ideal. It is known that groups formed under emotional pressures of anxiety and despair tend to create an elated and narcissistic identity. All negative, heavy and bad or 'dark' attributes, symbolising the despair and grief, are projected onto external objects or what Adorno calls the out-group. The suicidal despair of this generation of Germans was projected and institutionalised through practices of ghettoisation, sadistic policing, intimidation and, eventually, genocide. Mostly Jews, but also Ukrainians, Slavs, gypsies and other groups designated races were classified as inferior and became feared as a demonic force as Hitler's ideal of the Aryan Volk was increasingly deified. The history of the extermination camps has been well recorded, especially by survivors such as Primo Levi. The subjective effect of surviving genocide has been researched by Bettelheim and others.

Predictably the iconography of Nazi ideology centred on the metaphor of the ideal father in Hitler, the fatherland, the people and a mythical 'past'. The ideal of an immutable and insuperable father was of obvious significance to that generation, and many sought paternal protection in the uniformity of the party structure. Psychoanalytic observation also reveals that the 'ideal' father was a regressive phenomenon, incorporating the fantasy of a fusion of both parents into a single entity.

This 'combined parent' imago protects the subject from the reality of sexual difference, an Oedipal reality, by maintaining the delusion that infantile wishes can be realised. The 'phallic mother' or the maternal father is a fantasy which maintains a merged ego, and which attempts to avoid the superego and feelings of guilt. Grunberger notes:

When Eichmann listened to the enumeration of the monstrous crimes of which he was accused he remained unmoved; for they were obviously mere words without any real meaning or content. But when reminded by the judge that he should stand when addressed, he offered embarrassed apologies, stuttered and reddened with shame. In this he felt himself guilty, since for a moment he had forgotten the rule of respect for his superiors which had been taught him throughout his training. (12).

Without the superego, guilt cannot be experienced, the ego ideal takes its place and only shame can be felt, like the reaction of the pre-Oedipal child before a reprimanding parent. True guilt requires an intrapsychic experience of loss and grief within an integrated ego. Guilt implies an acceptance of moral standards. Shame only requires an obedience to external authority. The Nazi ideology encouraged and exploited the regressed condition of its constituency by allowing aggression and hate to be directed at the Jewish community without any sense of guilt.

Further examination of the iconography of Naziism shows more attributes of the Nazi ideal. The ritualistic use of torchlight processions, searchlight beams at rallies, the swastika symbol of infinite life and the sun, the physical appearance of the Aryan ideal, blond-haired and muscular, all were associated with lightness, euphoria,

sunshine, purity. Their opposites, fear, anxiety were all projected onto the Jewish other. Jewish culture, with its strong tradition of family life and a paternal divinity, must have represented a deeply enviable condition for the Christian generation of sons whose own fathers had, symbolically and materially, been absent.

Wangh and Grunberger's analyses both allocate a central role to the unconscious roots of racism in disturbances of the Oedipus complex, whilst integrating this factor within a historical account which recognizes class analysis, political and social analysis, and the analysis of cultural factors. Racisms are plural and differ from one another according to specific conditions. Racisms cannot be understood except in terms of the complex interaction of social, economic, political and unconscious forces. Without in any way detracting from the attribution of determinate power to these forces I propose that analyses of racism, like analyses of the social position of women, have tended to misrecognize the power exerted over social forces by psychic structure and unconscious phantasy.

Existing materialist analyses of racism have tended to be political histories focusing on the power of capitalism, the politics of imperialism and colonialism, the economic function of migrant and immigrant populations as unpaid labourers or a reserve army of labour. The literature on these aspects of the causes of racist ideologies is substantial and inclusive. More recently the concept of institutionalised racism has been proposed by

Dummett as a means of analysing the operation of power in ideological structures (13). Dummett shows that racist ideology is built into social institutions at levels which pre-empt voluntary choice on the part of those people working within these institutions. The concept of unconscious structure is not explicitly used but is implied in Dummett's analysis. The unconscious, intrapsychic, structures of racism were first analysed in anti-semitism because many practising psychoanalysts were Jewish (it has even been suggested that Freud's psychological insight arose out of the social and political subordination of the Jews in nineteenth century Austria) but the theory is equally applicable to understanding white racism in Britain today.

Psychoanalytic insights have been used to decode racisms, for example Fanon's works analyse French racism towards Algerians and West Indians. Kovel's work analyses white racism in North America. Hall, Bhabha, Majarat, Spivak and others have added psychoanalytic insights to sociological perspectives wherever necessary and appropriate, to reveal the covert racism of apparently 'neutral' ideological representations (14). They have also revealed the unconscious phantasies in contradictory stereotypes of people of colour. A more extensive use of psychoanalytic concepts, especially those of projection, unconscious infantile rage, and sadistic unconscious phantasy, denial, fears of 'contamination' and the emotional meaning of 'dirt', remains to be devised and fully elaborated. A psychoanalytic view has much to

contribute to understanding many aspects of institutionalised racism, not only in the forms of social organisation of groups and their defences against anxiety (15), but also in recognising the meaning of metaphors used in racist representations. For example, the language of racism is often based on metaphors of liquidity; so that indigenous black populations or immigrant populations are described as 'swamping' white natives, or 'waves' of immigration are described: measures are taken to 'control the flow' or 'influx' of alien peoples into Britain. To understand this, the unconscious significance of Britain's geography should be taken into account, Ernest Jones notes:

The complexes to which the idea of an island home tends to become attached are those relating to the ideas of women, virgin, mother and womb; all of which fuse into the central complex of the womb of a virgin mother. This means, of course, one's own birthplace ... Every male cherishes the thought that his mother is a virgin, this representing the repudiation of the father, which psychoanalysis has shown to be a normal constituent of the universal Oedipus complex ... It is not surprising to find a place so closely connected with water as an island functioning as a common womb symbol; ... the frequent unconscious process of inversion of course aids this; a place contained by water instead of a place containing water.(16)

The cultural 'alien', especially the dark-featured, becomes the symbol of the dark stranger; the bad father invading the womb of the mother. This unconscious phantasy of a primal scene fuels the nationalism of the 'sons' defending their virgin Britannia from the penetration of foreigners. The role of sexuality, as a component of unconscious phantasy is also of importance here, the cultural alien is often ascribed with an uninhibited or uncontrolled sexuality which represents a projected

phantasy of the envious and prohibitive intrapsychic conflict of the white narcissist. This mechanism is common to both the misrepresentation of women and the misrepresentation of people of colour.

Because both racism and sexism are institutionalised systems of denial and projection, defending the subject against knowledge of their own infantile aggression, they have shared roots in intrapsychic conflict. It follows that the politics and practices needed in order to change these institutionalised forms of culturally condoned cruelty must necessarily be linked. There exists an integral connection between the politics of feminism and anti-racism, and it can be found in their shared prioritisation of the politics of representation, including the forms of representation in the language of theory. The kinds of representations that circulate in theoretical discourse, or science, have been explored in terms of their ethnocentric and phallocentric assumptions by feminist scholars and those challenging racism.

Feminist practice cannot succeed in transforming phallocentric ideology unless women recognise the ethnocentric narcissism which supports that ideology. Racism cannot be fully overcome until its roots in unconscious phantasy are recognised and understood. The meanings of racist representations are sustained by the unconscious phantasies produced by infantile aggression, and it is these that connect the meanings of colour and visual difference to a system of positive and negative values, idealisation and debasement, and to a system of

sexual difference. I contend that ideologies of racism operate by condoning the direction of cruelty, without guilt, towards a designated 'other'. This operation is identical to the operation of the scapegoating of women as objects of contempt or aggression that is to be found in all cultures. In both systems the inner world of subjectivity is given power over social controls, and the subjects' deep fears of their own aggression and sadism are denied, and are projected onto a group designated as 'other' by virtue of their visible differences.

The system of sexual difference is an integral part of language and of ideological systems. The hypothesis that there is an unconscious mental life is supported by facts from history and culture, as well as psychoanalytic observation of human behaviour. That this unconscious mental life centres around certain prototypical phantasies, involving the desire for mastery and knowledge symbolised in a sexual sense, is the result of the significance of the exceptional human infantile dependence, which is retained in the adult in the form of an unconscious mind. This is due to the mechanisms particular to human evolution, the paedomorphosis that alters the relative rates and timing of physical growth and maturation: and the neoteny which had resulted in human offspring being dependent on their caretakers for a long time and thus liable to form psychological and emotional bonds. Whereas most explanations of institutionalised sexism and racism have sought answers in the historical materialism of Marxist analysis or have employed the positivist research methods

of classical sociology, I contend that the kind of knowledge that psychoanalysis can bring to bear on this process of institutionalisation of aggression opens up the conceptualisation of history to include what Althusser calls the 'omnihistorical' aspects of language and ideology.

I have explored many reasons for reconceptualising history in terms of its relation to the pre-historic. I contend that without such reconceptualisation a truly materialist and historical account of the system of sexual difference cannot be provided. Woman's time, or woman's history cannot be written entirely within the terms of the history of class society, or political economy. Neither is it to be written simply as a history of timeless biological difference. But a theory of materialism of mind, based on a concept of a dynamic interaction of body, mind, language and social environment must underlie the writing of the history of sexual difference. I have argued that 'biological essentialism' is a concept which is largely the product of social determinist theories, it could be said to be the 'other' of social determinism. The dangers of biological essentialism are evident in racist and sexist ideologies, but these dangers should not prevent us from finding what is valuable and necessary in biological theory. Its historical perspective, the evolutionary theory, provides a context for understanding the relative autonomy of psychic structure, as well as the dialectic between psyche and environment. The danger of ignoring this theoretical perspective is that the long term causes

of change will not be adequately understood or taken into account in social planning, and potentially substantial change will be sacrificed to short term or immediate changes.

Finally I speculate on the consequences for theory of recognising the existence of the unconscious mind, and of understanding the origins of the unconscious mind in the interaction between mother and infant before language.

The prelinguistic forms of knowledge, being least apt to be correctly rendered in symbolic form, are the most difficult to contain within rationalist and scientific forms of language. But they are nevertheless not to be conceived of as simply the semiotic "chora", as Kristeva has termed it, the 'ratio' of the Symbolic order, or what the latter as it were 'leaves out'. Prelinguistic forms have their own logic and structure, their own narratives and meanings, in which we find contained certain prototypical phantasies of the types described above. To overlook the prelinguistic because its logic is not reducible to the logic of conscious symbolic thought is wrong and in fact leads to reactionary thought. The form of recognition of prelinguistic knowledge is that of intuition, the awareness of evidence derived from emotional knowledge. Intuition is always present in even the most positivist of science, if only to be ignored or displaced, as Devereux has argued. However, a more appropriate use of intuition can be made if it is used in order to provide evidence from the 'inner world' of subjectivity on the meaning of gender and sexual difference, and if it is

integrated with other research methods of general science or theory. In the previous chapter on the textual analysis of prelinguistic scripts, the phylogenetic prelinguistic, the intuitive method is used with the theoretical, and these are integrated in an exploration of the meaning and symbolisation of sexual difference in a range of prehistoric languages, and in contemporary theoretical language. I contend that these scripts provide evidence of a set of metaphoric associations around the meaning of 'female' which can loosely be described as deriving from the intuitive knowledge that 'femaleness' is an aspect of 'mother'. Thus female is not the opposite of male; the triangular structure of mother, male, female, which underlies the dual opposition of male and female is also discerned in the theoretical language of psychoanalysis. Theories of phallic monism are criticised and it is suggested that theories of female psychic specificity are more correct and more useful than those of phallic monism.

Intuitive knowledge is derived, it has been suggested, from emotional experience, but differs from that experience in that emotions cause an active form of experience leading to expression or action, whereas intuition could be said to be the knowledge produced by the transformation of emotion into thought. Intuition is also mainly derived from prelinguistic experience from which it derives its characteristic of being 'uncanny'. The prelinguistic is, psychologically, a product of the wordless dialogue, or interaction, between mother and infant. Thus the prelinguistic aspect of adult

subjectivity refers to representations of this state of emotional attachment, of bonding or nurturance. Because this early experience is completely repressed at the time of the castration complex, and in men this early attachment becomes substituted for a sexual attachment to a woman as partner, there is a tendency for most theory which is written by men to repeat this process on the level of theory. In other words, the significance of the mother-infant bond becomes repressed, and is thus thought to be obscure, intuition is also described as obscure, and in its place a relation of opposition, of otherness, is substituted, which produces the fantasy that objectivity is the opposite of subjectivity.

The misrecognition of the significance of the mother-infant bond as the early basis of all subsequent human knowledge is conducted at great cost. It results in what Winnicott has termed the fear of "WOMAN", the basis of the social subordination of women, and in the idealisation of maleness and fathers. In western European culture we have an institutionalisation of forms of knowledge, in our educational and academic institutions, which has produced knowledge that is almost always conceptualised in terms of fathers. Not only are these institutions almost entirely staffed by men, but more importantly the traditions of authority, of authorship, the lineage of antecedents operate through a patriline of founding fathers which I have described above as, at times, totemic. The patriline of knowledge in theoretical discourse is particularly evident in the stringent regulation of the boundaries

between disciplines. Whereas the best scientific theory acknowledges that the objects of science are not autonomous, and that the scientific languages themselves are not absolute, but are metaphors, the anxiety that is generated by attempts to connect the objects or languages of two adjacent sciences is intense. This is evident in the history of the debates between anthropology and psychoanalysis as explored in chapter 2. Feminist thought has demonstrated the inextricable links between subjectivity and objectivity, and must now begin to recognise that these links are based on the early tie between mothers and infants. With a better understanding of the unconscious mind feminist theory can explore the effect of this fact of sexual difference of the institutionalised forms of knowledge that exist today. The self-reflexivity that is increasingly being demanded of all positivistic forms of knowledge will become an integral part of the recognition of the significance of the system of sexual difference as it now begins to transform all existing forms of theory. Unless the reality of psychic conflict can be internalised and recognised as an internal fact there can be no possibility of an equal and mutual collaboration between men and women. The social and theoretical recognition of the psychic dependence on women is a necessary precondition of any long-standing change in social, legal and economic position of women. Whether social institutions are conceptualised as the phenomenal forms of underlying economic or political systems, or whether they are conceptualised as determining forces in

themselves; the changes that legislation and resourcing can bring about are ineffectual without the acknowledgement of the fact of this dependence on women. If the fact is accepted on a subjective, social and discursive level this may then facilitate a realistic conceptualisation of women, unimpeded by fantasy, so that human needs may be realistically taken into account in theory, in culture, and in social and political planning and organisation.

Footnotes for Conclusion

- 1 The paradox of the Oedipal attack on the father is that it depends on the idealisation of the father, so that the 'enemy' is attributed with overwhelming power. When most academic institutions are staffed with men the male Oedipal configuration will predominate so that all significant action is seen as between fathers and sons. The ideology of the student power movement which influenced the left wing politics of the following decade particularly emphasised the difference and opposition between generations, and is clearly informed by Oedipal fantasy.
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